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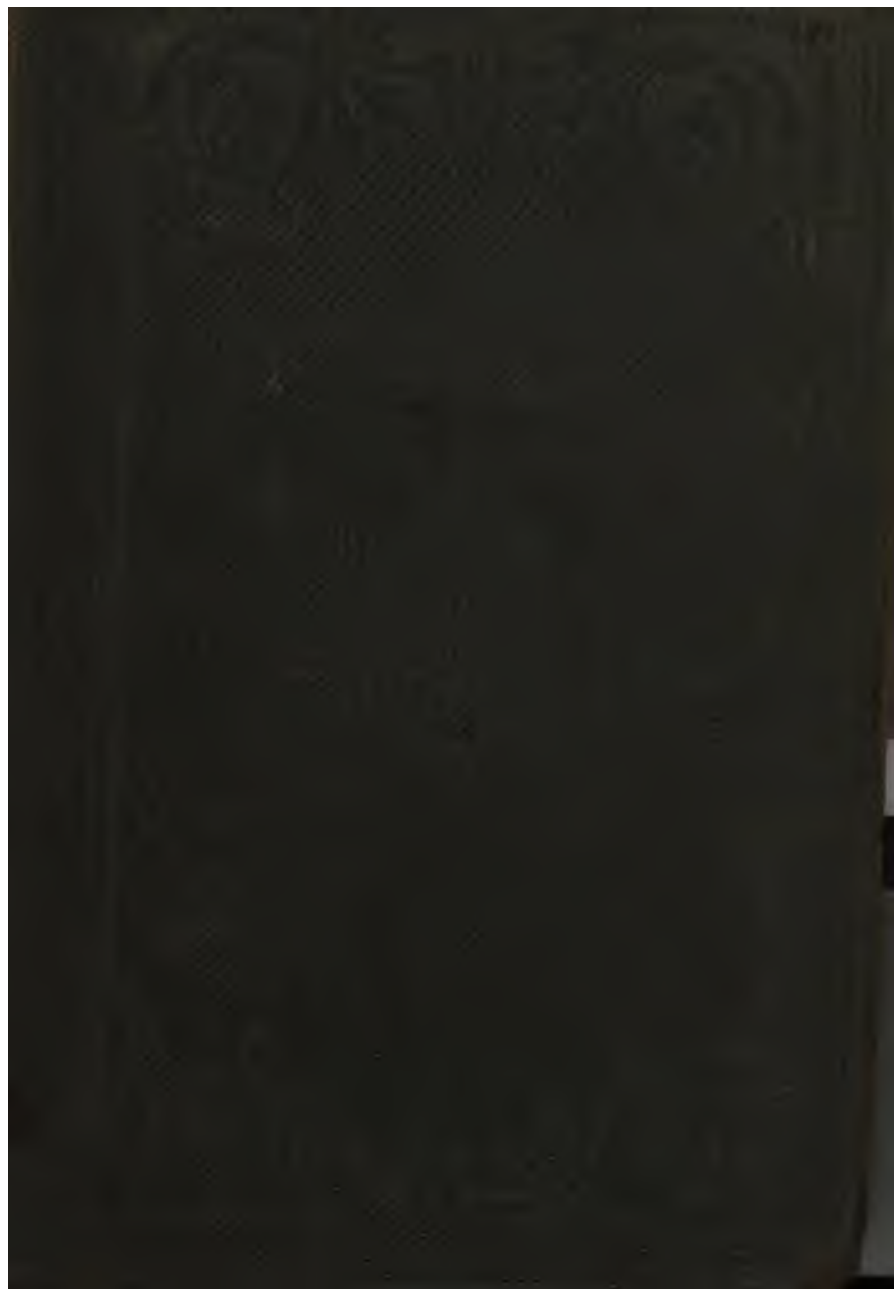
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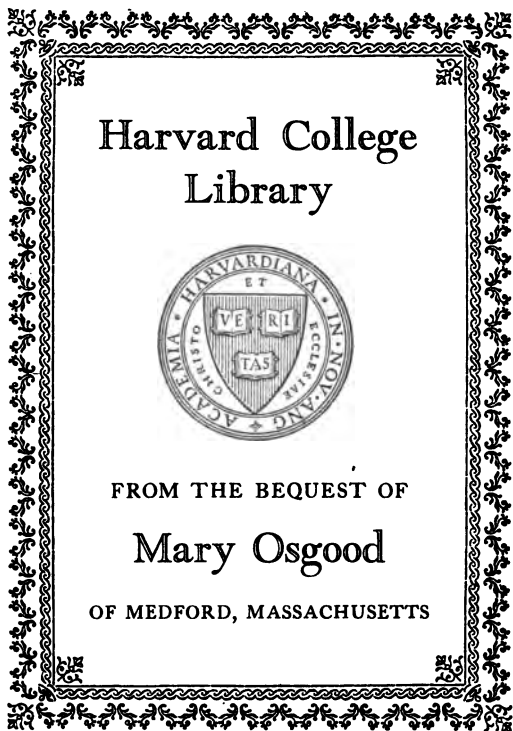
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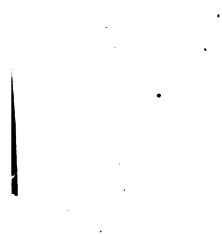


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W. H. Crook

MENDIP ANNALS:

OR,

A NARRATIVE OF THE CHARITABLE LABOURS

OF

HANNAH AND MARTHA MORE

IN THEIR NEIGHBOURHOOD.

BEING

THE JOURNAL OF MARTHA MORE.

EDITED, WITH ADDITIONAL MATTER, BY

ARTHUR ROBERTS, M.A.

RECTOR OF WOODRISING, NORFOLK, AND AUTHOR OF

"PLAIN SERMONS," "SERMONS ON SCRIPTURE HISTORIES," ETC.

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TO
THE LADY OLIVIA BERNARD SPARROW,
OF BRAMPTON PARK, HUNTS,
THE VALUED FRIEND AND CORRESPONDENT OF
HANNAH MORE,
AND, LIKE HER, A HELPER OF THE TRUTH AS IT IS IN JESUS,
THE EDITOR RESPECTFULLY DEDICATES
THIS LITTLE VOLUME

WOODRISING RECTORY,
Sept. 1858.



MENDIP ANNALS.

INTRODUCTION.

THE editor of the following journal feels some degree of self-reproach in having been so long in possession of such an edifying manuscript without having taken any active steps towards preparing it for publication. It will be found to be a memorable history, told with great simplicity and liveliness of pen, of self-denying efforts for the good of souls, in a way which, at that period, might be said to be unprecedented. These are days when education for the poor is an absorbing subject, and engages the attention, not of the Church only, but the Senate. Village schools are almost everywhere, and great facilities are given both to their erection and support. But the case was greatly otherwise at the time when these enterprising Christian ladies commenced their operations. It was then almost a new idea to educate the poor. The undertaking was accounted a quixotic one, and many seemed even to regard it as an unwarranted invasion of sin's rightful territories. Sunday-schools, it is true, had recently

been set on foot by the philanthropic Mr Raikes of Gloucester, but the idea was in its infancy, and had been scarcely acted upon elsewhere.

It was under circumstances such as these, that two maiden ladies embarked upon a scheme which seemed to be the proper work of a *Society*, and to require the united efforts of a whole body of philanthropists. It is true they were supplied with considerable funds by a Wilberforce and Henry Thornton, the former of whom had been the first encourager, perhaps the first prompter, of their undertaking; but these eminent Christian patriots, living at a distance, and engaged in larger matters, could take no active part in the concern. The two noble-hearted sisters were the Atlases who bore the burden on their shoulders; or, to use Mr Wilberforce's simile, were the mainspring of the machine. One of them, be it remembered, had but just emerged from the polished literary circles of the great metropolis, where she had been courted and caressed (I might say, perhaps, half-worshipped) by all the wits and geniuses of that memorable epoch—a bright star even in those companies of which Johnson, Burke, and Reynolds were the dazzling ornaments. Both of them were women of feeble constitution and rather nervous temperament; and the elder sister seldom was exempt from most incapacitating headaches.

It was no ordinary effort of benevolence for two ladies, situated thus, to originate both weekly and Sunday-schools in nine or ten mining villages of

Somersetshire, which were *then*, whatever their position may be *now*, in a most wild and barbarous condition—some of them scarcely, indeed, safe places for a traveller to pass, much less for unprotected females to be resorting to continually. Yet here it was that these mothers in Israel founded their establishments, setting on foot not schools only for the young, but Scripture readings for the adult part of the population, and well-conducted clubs for the poor women. And all this, too, in the face, not only of discouragement, but often of most determined opposition, on the part of the leading persons in the parish. Even the parochial ministers, especially at first, afforded them but cold encouragement; and, in one sad instance, not soon to be forgotten, cruel persecution and slanderous defamation were the recompence they met with at the hands of one who should have been the pastor of his village. Nothing but the highest sense of duty could have borne them through those stormy waves. Yet borne through them they *were*. Unwearied was their perseverance. There was a Christian heroism in their doings, which “the Spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind,” could alone have breathed into their bosoms. They adventured into places where even stout men feared to follow them. They were oftentimes detained by zeal in the scenes of their exertions till their return home became a night adventure.

And to what is all this energy and perseverance to be mainly traced? To their faith and hope as to the

issue. The readers of this journal cannot but be struck with the hopeful, sanguine spirit of the author everywhere apparent in it, arising not from any feeling of self-confidence—far from it, for she was a great self-distruster—but rather from the assurance which she felt, that as it was a work which God had apparently put into their hands by providential leadings, He would surely bless and prosper it. And it was the “hope that maketh not ashamed.” For their labour “was not in vain in the Lord.” Remarkable, indeed, was the result of it.

Never, I conceive, have efforts in the cause of Christ been honoured with so large a recompence of spiritual success. Not only were children’s hearts made wise unto salvation, but an astonishing impression was wrought on the adults. The most hard and rugged natures were melted into tenderness. Rough workers in the coal-pits became gentle-hearted, philanthropic Christians. Instead of the grossest immorality, a high standard of modesty and decency became everywhere apparent. Instead of an audience barely plural, the churches, especially Cheddar, became filled with worshippers. And, what was best of all, instead of an utter recklessness about the soul, so that its very existence was scarce recognised, “What must I do to be saved?” became an anxious question, and the gospel which replied to it, “the joy and the rejoicing of the heart.” Whilst the magistrate had cause to rejoice that he had fewer crimes to punish, the heart of the faithful minister was cheered and gratified by

an increased attendance at his church, and an increased attention to his ministrations. The pious author of this journal has humorously written on its cover, "I have not imitated Xenophon." In one respect she *has*. It might be truly said, both of her and her admirable sister, as it might also of a patriotic nobleman in *our* days, that, under God, they led forth their ten thousand from the land of enemies, and in the face of continued opposition, till, as the one sang their *Θαλασσα* at the sight of the much wished for sea, so these their hallelujahs and hosannas at the prospect of a heavenly glory.

It is an interesting matter of inquiry, What was the peculiar system of instruction which led, under grace, to such glorious results? And the answer is, that it was instruction of a very simple character. It is the fashion in these days, even in our village schools, to give poor country boys and girls what might be called an accomplished education, and the acquirements that are looked for in the masters and the mistresses are often such as might make a figure in a university. It may be reasonably questioned whether such extra instruction of the poor as this, especially if unaccompanied by strenuous efforts to make them wise unto salvation, is really calculated for their good. Often, perhaps, are they thus raised beyond the level of the humble line of life which, after all, they *must* pursue. The two ladies whose successful labours are recorded in these pages adopted a more simple plan, which will be best described in Mrs Hannah More's own words. in

an apologetic letter addressed to Mr Bowdler, hitherto, I think, unpublished :—

“Let me just add, sir, that my plan for instructing the poor is very limited and strict. They learn of week-days such coarse works as may fit them for servants. I allow of no writing. My object has not been to teach dogmas and opinions, but to form the lower class to habits of industry and virtue. I know no way of teaching morals but by infusing principles of Christianity, nor of teaching Christianity without a thorough knowledge of Scripture. In teaching in our Sunday-schools, the only books we use are two little tracts called ‘Questions for the Mendip Schools,’ to be had of Hatchard, the Church Catechism (these are hung up in frames, half-a-dozen in a room), the Catechism broke into short questions, Spelling-books, Psalters, Common Prayer-book, and Bible. The little ones learn ‘Watts’ Hymns for Children’—they repeat the Collect every Sunday. In some of the schools a plain printed sermon and a printed prayer are read in the evening to the grown-up scholars and parents, and a psalm is sung. When we are present, my sister or I read them ; in our absence, the schoolmistress. The clergyman chooses them, and is generally present whether we are there or not. I was hardly ever once at the Blagdon school without Mrs Bere at least.

“For many years I have given away annually near two hundred Bibles, Common Prayer-books, and Testaments. To teach the poor to *read*, without providing them with safe books, has always appeared to

me a dangerous measure. This induced me to the laborious undertaking of the Cheap Repository Tracts, which had such great success, that above two millions were sold in one year, in the height of our domestic troubles.

“In some parishes, where the poor are numerous, and where there are no gentry to assist them, I have instituted, with considerable expense to myself, Friendly Benefit Societies for poor women, which have proved a great relief to the sick and lying-in, especially in the late seasons of scarcity and distress. We have raised, in the parish of Cheddar only, a fund of near £300—in Shipham, very near as much. This money I have placed out in the Stocks. The late lady of the manor left, at her death, a legacy both to the club and the school, in testimony of her good opinion of the utility of my institutions. We have two little annual festivals for the children and poor women, which are always attended by a large concourse of gentry and clergy. As the morals of my own sex are the great object of my regard, I have made it a standing rule at these anniversaries, that every young woman bred in my school, and belonging to the club, who has been married during the preceding year, and can produce a testimonial of her good conduct from the parish minister and schoolmistress, is presented by me with a public reward, consisting of a crown-piece, a pair of white stockings of my own knitting, and a handsome Bible. This trifling encouragement has had a good effect, and sobriety and virtue are now considered as necessary to

the establishment of a young woman. At our feast last week, I had no less than seven *honest* brides who appeared for the premium. At one of these public meetings, Mr Bere loudly declared that, since the institution of my schools, he could now dine in peace ; for that, where he used to issue ten warrants, he was not now called upon for two, so great was the reform."

In a letter addressed to another correspondent, she observes—"I have taken the liberty to enclose the little elementary tracts I make use of in my schools. They are few in number ; but I think they contain, together with the Catechism, the general principles of Christianity. A few plain things of this sort, well digested, appear to me more useful than long, dry, tedious explanations, which, though they may be learned as a *task*, yet, if they are not made lively and interesting, the children will not much delight in it. The grand subject of instruction with me is the Bible itself ; the familiar use of which I greatly prefer to any abridgments, histories, or expositions. To infuse a large quantity of Scripture into their minds, with plain, practical comments in the way of conversation, is the means which I have found, under Providence, instrumental in forming the principles and directing the hearts of youth. God has promised His *blessing* on His *Word*. The great thing is to get it faithfully explained, in such a way as shall be likely to touch the heart and influence the conduct. I usually make them get by heart some of the most important chapters—such as our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount, the 9th

and 53d of Isaiah, the 51st, 25th, 103d, 139th, and many other Psalms. The Psalms are, in particular, materials for devotion; and young people, having the most striking passages of Scripture by heart, are furnished with a little stock of ideas, to which the teacher can refer in his conversation with them, and it particularly enables them to understand what they hear at church. In order to do this more effectually, the teacher should inform them well in the different parts of the Liturgy, that they may distinguish between prayer and thanksgiving, petition and adoration. I delight much in familiarising them with the histories in Genesis, &c., as they furnish such abundant matter for practical illustration, and suggest striking applications to their own hearts and lives. I furnish my teachers with 'Burkitt's Exposition,' which, being very sound and sober, restrains and directs the principles of the teacher, while it forms those of the child. To make good members of society (and this can only be done by making good Christians) has been my aim. Speculative doctrines I always avoid; but with the plain leading doctrines of Scripture, as exemplified in our excellent Liturgy and Church Establishment, they ought to be well acquainted. Principles, and not opinions, are what I labour to give them."

Such was the simple, yet scriptural machinery which it pleased God to bless to an extent which has hardly, perhaps, been equalled in any subsequent efforts of the kind. A valuable lesson may surely be derived from it—that a large blessing may be looked for on those systems

of instruction where the Bible is the basis, the love of Christ the actuating motive, and the glory of Christ the great object kept in view. I will now leave the journal to tell its own tale. It will be found, I think (to adopt the words of my late revered father), "a specimen of the fervent spirit and simple piety of the warm-hearted writer, a woman whose frame was the weak and languid vehicle of a strong and warm heart, directing its affections first to her God and Saviour, and then expanding them over the whole human race in labours of love." Let me add to this brief delineation of her character a consideration which has greatly influenced me in publishing this journal, and which I cannot more suitably express than in the following communication from Lady Olivia Sparrow. "Mrs Martha More," she observes, "was a most estimable person, but whose admiration and love for her sister caused her to keep herself, as much as she could, out of observation, so that, in fact, little is known of her." The journal I now publish will shew, I think, that she is one who ought to be known better, and that it is not without a cause I have brought her memory to light—that men might see what were her good works, and might "glorify her Father which is in heaven."

The reader who is conversant with the Cheap Repository Tracts of Mrs Hannah More will see, from a perusal of the ensuing journal, that the tracts of that series which bear the title of "The Sunday-school" and "Hester Wilmot" were written *experimentally*, and founded upon fact. Indeed, the whole idea of that

valuable series may be said to have been suggested in the first instance by these charitable labours, and to have grown as a branch out of their root. One good undertaking often proves, in its progress, the parent of another. Thus that great institution, the Church Missionary Society, owes its birth, under God, to one of a more private nature established by the late Mr Newton for spiritual conference among the clergy and laity; and our Ragged Schools, and other charitable plans for bettering the poor, have either grown from the stem of the London City Mission, or have been the spiritual results of it.

The Editor begs to inform the reader that the illustrative matter by which he has here and there interrupted the journal, is distinguished from it by being enclosed within brackets.

A JOURNAL OF THE MENDIP SCHOOLS,

FROM THE YEAR 1789 TO THE CLOSE OF 1791.

"I have not imitated Xenophon."

IN the month of August 1789, Providence directed Mr Wilberforce and his sister to spend a few days at Cowslip Green. The Cliffs of Cheddar are esteemed the greatest curiosity in those parts. We recommended Mr W. not to quit the country till he had spent a day in surveying these tremendous works of nature. We easily prevailed upon him, and the day was fixed; but, after a little reflection, he changed his mind, appeared deeply engaged in some particular study, fancied time would scarcely permit, and the whole was given up. The subject of the cliffs was renewed at breakfast; we again extolled their beauties, and urged the pleasure he would receive by going. He was prevailed on, and went. I was in the parlour when he returned. With the eagerness of vanity (having recommended the pleasure), I inquired how he liked the cliffs. He replied they were very fine, but the poverty and distress of the people was dreadful. This was all that passed. He retired to his apartment, and dismissed even his reader. I said to his sister and mine, I feared Mr W. was not

well. The cold chicken and wine put into the carriage for his dinner were returned untouched. Mr W. appeared at supper, seemingly refreshed with a higher feast than we had sent with him. The servant, at his desire, was dismissed, when immediately he began, "Miss Hannah More, something must be done for Cheddar." He then proceeded to a particular account of his day—of the inquiries he had made respecting the poor. There was no resident minister, no manufactory, nor did there appear any dawn of comfort, either temporal or spiritual. The method or possibility of assisting them was discussed till a late hour. It was at length decided in a few words by Mr W.'s exclaiming, "*If you will be at the trouble, I will be at the expense.*" Something commonly called an impulse crossed my heart which told me it was God's work, and would do; and though I never have, nor probably shall, recover the same emotion, yet it is my business to water it with watchfulness, and to act up to its then dictates. Mr W. and his sister left us in a day or two afterwards. We turned many schemes in our heads every possible way. At length those measures were adopted which led to the foundation of the different schools.

This journal opens with our leaving Bristol early in the morning, the latter end of September 1789, with an intention of inquiring into the particular state of Cheddar, and a design to open a Sunday-school for the benefit of the poor children there, previous to our settling at Cowslip Green the following spring, which it

was our intention to do. We stopped at Cross in order to make inquiries of a poor rabbit-catcher, to whom we found it necessary to impart the heads of our idea, in order to gain information, as he lives near the place. He was a Quaker, and appeared serious. He was visibly struck at the prospect of doing good at Cheddar. A tear rolling down his rough cheek seemed to announce there was grace in the heart. After we had gained from him what intelligence we could, his last words were, "You will have much difficulty, but let not the enemy tempt you to go back; and God bless the work."

We learned from him that nothing material could be undertaken at Cheddar without the concurrence of Mr C., a rich farmer, who lived ten miles below. We proceeded through ploughed fields and shocking roads. After many inquiries, difficulties, and alarms, we found the habitation of this rough man. We were almost starved; and whilst his wife was getting us some dinner, we opened our business, at which he was very much shocked. He assured us religion would be the ruin of agriculture; that it was a very dangerous thing, and had produced much mischief ever since it was introduced by the monks down at Glastonbury. So very much in earnest was he at one part of our discourse, that we were obliged prudently to change the subject, and talk of the excellency of his wine, as though we had been soliciting a vote at an election. This put him into good humour, which was considerably heightened by our declaring we should ask no sub-

scription. He assured us it was a pity we should take the trouble; the Cheddar people were extremely well off, there being a large legacy left to be given in time of distress, though "to be sure, they had not received any for the last seven-and-thirty-years, it having been thrown into Chancery upon a quarrel of the two churchwardens, but now he believed it might soon be settled, as *he* was appointed a trustee." This did not seem to augur any increasing prospect of advantage to the poor the next thirty years.

After artfully weeding out of him, by slow degrees, all the material outline of Cheddar, and feeling we had gained ground with him, we quitted this ignorant, cold, unfeeling rich farmer, returned to our inn at Cross, and early the next morning reached Cheddar, and though not eight o'clock we were obliged to begin our canvass. We knocked at the door of a respectable farm-house; the owner's name Gilling—quiet, civil people. We opened our commission. They were utterly astonished at strangers coming there to do good (their own expression), but were not insensible to the possible usefulness of a Sunday-school, for they had heard of them, and read about them in the Bristol papers; and, indeed, their apples would be safer if the children were confined. They pressed us much to breakfast; and upon our refusal, we were offered a little brandy and water. After our adventure the day before, we felt this quite an animated reception, and marched off rejoicing at our improved good fortune. Our next host and hostess thought it would be giving us a good deal of trouble,

but they were very good things to keep in the children, as there was a deal of robbing orchards. Would not we please to have a little brandy and water? Having assured them we seldom drank so early in the morning, we knocked at the next door of decent appearance, and so on till we made eleven of these visits, the dialogue at each house not varying six words. This large and deserted village was left without a resident minister; and it is a fact, that if there be a necessity to marry, christen, or bury, it must be postponed till the Sunday; and there is as much knowledge of Christ in the interior of Africa as there is to be met with in this wretched, miserable place. This was a motive for double vigour and activity. We therefore began to look out for a house, and fortunately procured one immediately which we could not have obtained had our search been made a week later.

We returned to Bristol, leaving the people totally ignorant of our names.

[A report of these preliminary steps was made, as it appears, upon the spot, by Mrs Hannah More to Mr Wilberforce. The following is her lively letter on the subject:—

“GEORGE HOTEL, CHEDDAR, 1789.

“DEAR SIR,—Though this is but a *romantic place*, as my friend Matthew well observed, yet you would laugh to see the bustle I am in. I was told we should meet with great opposition if I did not try to propitiate the chief despot of the village, who is very rich, and very brutal; so I ventured to the den of this monster, in a

country as savage as himself, near Bridgewater. He begged I would not think of bringing any religion into the country; it was the worst thing in the world for the poor, for it made them lazy and 'useless. In vain did I represent to him that they would be more industrious, as they were better principled; and that, for my part, I had no selfish views in what I was doing. He gave us to understand that he knew the world too well to believe either the one or the other. Somewhat dismayed to find that our success bore no proportion to our submissions, we were almost discouraged from more visits, but we found that friends must be secured at all events; for if these rich savages set their faces against us, and influenced the poor people, we saw that nothing but hostilities would ensue: so that we made eleven more of these agreeable visits, and, as we improved in the art of canvassing, had better success. Miss Wilberforce would have been shocked had she seen the petty tyrants whose insolence we stroked and tamed, the ugly children we fondled, the pointers and spaniels we caressed, the cider we commended, and the wine we swallowed. After these irresistible flatteries, we inquired of each if he could recommend us to a house, and said that we had a little plan which we hoped would secure their orchards from being robbed, their rabbits from being shot, their game from being stolen, and which might lower the poor-rates. If effect be the best proof of eloquence, then mine was a good speech, for I gained, at length, the hearty concurrence of the whole people, and their promise to discourage or

favour the poor in proportion as they were attentive or negligent in sending their children. Patty, who is with me, says she has good hope that the hearts of some of these rich poor wretches may be touched. They are as ignorant as the beasts that perish, intoxicated every day before dinner, and plunged in such vices as make me begin to think London a virtuous place. By their assistance, I procured immediately a good house which, when a partition is taken down, and a window added, will receive a great number of children. The house, and an excellent garden of almost an acre of ground, I have taken at once for six guineas and a-half per year. I have ventured to take it for *seven years*; there is courage for you! It is to be put in order *immediately*, 'for the night cometh;' and it is a comfort to think that, though I may be dust and ashes in a few weeks, yet by that time this business will be in actual motion. I have written to different manufacturing towns for a mistress, but can get nothing hitherto. As to the mistress for the *Sunday-school*, and the religious part, I have employed Mrs Easterbrook, of whose judgment I have a good opinion. I hope Miss Wilberforce will not be frightened, but I am afraid she must be called a Methodist. I asked the farmers if they had no resident curate. They told me they had a right to insist on one, which right they confessed they had never ventured to exercise, for fear *their tithes should be raised*. I blushed for my species. The glebe-house is good for my purpose. The vicarage of Cheddar is in the gift of the Dean of Wells.

The incumbent is a Mr R——, who has something to do, but I cannot find out what, in the University of Oxford, where he resides. The curate lives at Wells, twelve miles distant. They have only service once a-week, and there is scarcely an instance of a poor person being visited or prayed with."

Mrs M. reports of the incumbent of a neighbouring parish, that he was intoxicated about six times a-week, and was very frequently prevented from preaching by black eyes, earned by fighting! She tells her correspondent in another letter, "We saw but one Bible in all the parish, and that was used to prop a flower-pot."

Whilst these enterprising Christian ladies were thus clearing the ground for their plans of future usefulness, Mr Wilberforce, the first prompter of the work, was not unmindful of his promises and undertakings with respect to it. As soon as he had thus heard of the preliminary steps which they had taken, he wrote to Mrs Hannah More as follows—"Your plan for Cheddar is a very good one, and I think you will find no difficulty so great as that of discovering a proper couple to carry it into execution. If you can meet with any such, by all means secure them. I will desire a friend of mine to make inquiry after a double-headed shot, fitted for doing execution in the same way, and, if successful, I shall be at no loss for an object elsewhere against which to direct my battery. As for the expense, the best proof you can give me that you believe me hearty in the cause, or sincere in the wishes

expressed in the former part of this letter, is to call on me for money without reserve. Every one should contribute out of his own proper fund. I have more money than time, and, if you, or rather your sister, on whom I foresee must be devolved the superintendence of our infant establishment, will condescend to be my almoner, you will enable me to employ some of the superfluity it has pleased God to give me, to good purpose. Sure I am that they who subscribe attention and industry, &c., furnish articles of more sterling and intrinsic value. Besides, I have a rich banker in London, Mr H. Thornton, whom I cannot oblige so much as by drawing on him for purposes like these. I shall take the liberty of enclosing a draft for £40, but this is only meant for beginning with.

“Now for the mission. Indeed, I fear, with you, nothing can be done in the regular way. But these poor people must not, therefore, be suffered to continue in their present lamentable state of darkness. You know you told me they saw the sun (the rector) but one day in the year, and even the moon (the curate) appeared but once a-week for an hour or two. The gravitation to Wells was too strong to be resisted. My advice then is, send for a comet. Whiston had them at command, and John Wesley is not unprovided. Take care, however, that eccentricity is not his only recommendation, and, if possible, see and converse with the man before he is determined on.”

The suggestion given in the latter portion of this letter never appears to have been acted upon. Mrs

More says, on the other hand, in an apologetic statement addressed some time afterwards to John Bowdler, Esq.—“The Methodists it has been my avowed object to counteract, insomuch that their preachers have inveighed against me by name in their pulpits, and they are the avowed enemies of my schools for attracting the people from their meetings to the church.”

In a subsequent letter, dated October 2, Mr Wilberforce writes—“I have taken measures to send a competent supply of the books which you desired. Your labours can only be equalled by Spenser’s lady-knights, and they seem to be much of the same kind too ;—I mean you have all sorts of monsters to cope withal.” In a following letter, written, it would seem, towards the close of the year, and after these plans of benevolence had been successfully experimented, “Your accounts,” he says, “have afforded me the utmost pleasure, and I would persuade myself that they will be as comfortable next year. I trust you will speak freely when the money is exhausted ; indeed, I conceive it must be all spent already. Not to do so would be to give way either to pride or to false delicacy.”

Thus, whilst those gifted ladies were carrying on upon the spot their self-denying labours, their noble-minded Gaius, at a distance off, was strengthening their hands, and forwarding them on their charitable journeys both by his letters and his contributions—“ready to distribute, willing to communicate,” and praying them, with much entreaty, that they would receive his gifts for the advancement of their work.]

And now we began to be very busy in endeavouring to find a suitable mistress. The excellent Mr Easterbrook was our grand resource; his pious soul being much elated with the prospect of instructing these poor ignorant people. He speedily introduced to us a person who had known brighter days, but whose change of situation was not unaccompanied with a change of heart. A profligate son was the means of humbling a proud spirit; an active zeal for worldly affairs was converted into an active zeal for God; and a lively imagination was made more so, by its object being changed to higher views. Mrs Baber appeared strikingly to be the very person we wanted. She consented to go, and leave her connexions, I believe with a spirit and desire of discharging so important a duty conscientiously. We left Bristol in October, and took up our abode at a little ale-house in Cheddar for a week, every hour occupied in preparations for opening the school. Mrs Baber arrived with the true spirit of a missionary, in a little cart, with her daughter and a spinning-mistress, in one of the wettest days imaginable.

Here we were all assembled together in the kitchen of a little public-house; and a good shoulder of mutton, we had the prudent precaution to procure at Uxbridge, was eagerly devoured with much appetite. The next day we collected all the parents of this vast parish—a sight truly affecting. Poor, miserable, and ignorant, not a ray of light appeared in the mind of any single one. It was a day of dreadful consideration in every

view : the deplorably dark state of the people before us—the appointment we seemed to be called to. Much prayer and much faith seemed necessary. By the following Sunday we had prepared everything in order, and on the 25th of October 1789, we opened our school with one hundred and forty children, with exhortation, portions of Scripture, and prayer. We attended them in procession to church. The clergyman, being advertised of our intention, was so very judicious as to give us a twelve minutes' discourse upon good Tory principles, upon the laws of the land and the Divine right of kings ; but the Divine right of the King of kings seemed to be a law above his comprehension.

The church was crowded ; it had never been remembered so full (but on club-days, and very particular occasions) for forty years. Till we appeared in the church, the people did not credit the possibility of all they had heard. We were only known by the name of *the ladies* ; and the travelling story was, that, about a month ago, two ladies came and made many inquiries about the poor, and talked about setting up a school, then went away, and nobody thought any more about it ; but sure enough, a few weeks after, they came, and did all they said they would. The day following we opened the School of Industry ; and after witnessing more ignorance than we supposed existed anywhere in England, we took leave of Cheddar, leaving poor Mrs Baber to encounter these savages, in a place where she was a total stranger.

About five weeks after this, I went down to make a last inquiry before the winter shut us out. The change I found was considerable. Upwards of thirty said the Catechism perfectly, forty could sing three psalms, and several great girls were beginning to know something of the Scriptures ; the face of the village much changed ; not a child to be found on the cliffs on a Sunday ; the church gradually filling. I thought this good news to carry home. Our first disappointment was in the spinning. An avaricious employer had deceived us, and the children's labour did not procure them so much wages as we expected. We went to the neighbouring manufacturing towns, endeavouring to procure something more profitable. Mr Serle, a man of honour and character, appeared struck with a probability that he could make it answer to himself and the school. However, by bad management on the part of his people, and idleness on that of the children, it failed after a few months' experiment. We were then driven to the necessity of spinning worsted for the stocking-makers at Axbridge.

About six months after the school was opened, we were struck with an idea of at least attempting to teach the parents of these poor children, by reading a chapter and sermon to them on a Sunday evening, to sing a psalm, and read a prayer. At first we had only four persons attending ; but, in a short time, the number increased to sixty.

[This fresh plan seems to have been set on foot during the absence of Mrs H. More, but not without

her full concurrence. She thus writes to her sister from London with respect to it:—

“ *March 4, 1790.*

“ As to improving upon the Cheddar scheme, I have thought over it soberly and coolly. Surely no harm can arise from giving leave to such parents as desire to hear their children instructed, to come in the evening, and be instructed themselves. We will at first limit the number. As to time, an hour will be quite sufficient; more would break in upon the children’s time, and take parents too long from their own families. They are so ignorant that they need to be taught the very elements of Christianity. Speak to Mr Forster, the clergyman, on the subject; he is disposed to be obliging and kind; he must see that it will enable them to understand his sermons better at church, and will bring more people there.”]

The rector now made his first annual appearance since the school was opened. He had been informed by an adversary of the evening meetings. He went to the house, talked very civilly to Mrs Baber, examined the children, praised the institution, applauded the evening reading, looked at the books, approved them, catechised and exhorted the children in the church, left them half a guinea, received his tithes, and marched off. Considering all this as great prosperity, and fancying we were going on well with respect both to the people and children’s improvements, we felt an earnest desire to make an attempt to assist some other poor villages.

[That this desire was gratified, with no small measure of self-sacrifice, will be seen by the following extract from a letter of Hannah More to a friend, dated Bath, Jan. 1, 1792 :—

“ I am thankful for the prospect of laying in a little health for future services, for I have partly pledged myself, in my own mind, if I live and have health and money, and the French do not come, to take up two new parishes next spring ; but as they are four miles below Cheddar, I have never dared reveal my intention to any one. I know sloth and self-love will say often, ‘ Spare thyself,’ and I feel the extreme concern it will give to those to whom I would wish to give nothing but pleasure ; but I have *counted the cost*. These parishes are large and populous. They are as dark as Africa ; and I do not like the thought that, at the day of judgment, any set of people should be found to have perished through ignorance who were within my possible reach, and only that I might have a little more ease. I will not say that I am not at times discouraged from this idea ; for example, this last week, when, with all my boasting, I have been laid by with five or six days of nervous headache.”

The weak state of health in which these two energetic sisters “ put their necks to the work of their Lord ” is thus touched upon, in his characteristic way, by the Rev. J. Newton :—“ You will allow me gently to sigh over the poor account you give me of your health. Yet I know all is right. Methinks, if I could, I would give you and Miss Patty, not ‘ shoes,’ but nerves and

sinews 'of brass and iron,' to fit you for traversing Mendip. But I should do wrong; for how *then* would 'the *power* of God' be manifested in *your weakness*? It is really singular that such an athletic service should be appointed for such delicate instruments. 'It is the Lord's doing, but it is marvellous in our eyes.' May He have all the glory, and may you have that comfort and satisfaction which may make you a rich compensation for all you suffer in so good a cause!"

Again, in a letter dated 1797, he says—"Your history and Miss Patty's, and, for aught I know, of all your ladies, seems to be comprised in two words—exertions and trials. What *exertions* has the Lord called you to? and what a tender, delicate state of health has He given you to support them? Indeed, when things are right, there are two reasons why trials and exertions are for the most part connected; the one is that His power may be so manifested in our weakness, that what is done by the instrument may evidently appear to be done by Himself, that the whole praise may be given unto Him alone; the other is for *our* sakes, that if the Lord is pleased to favour us with some zeal for His service, and some success in our endeavours, we may not forget what we are, nor think ourselves necessary or important. It gives me a striking proof of human depravity that so many precepts, cautions, and painful dispensations should be needful, and scarcely sufficient, to preserve a *sensible* sinner from pride."]

We were not long in discovering a sufficient number

of wretched, ignorant parishes. Among the most depraved and wretched were Shipham and Rowberrow, two mining villages, at the top of Mendip: the people savage, and depraved almost even beyond Cheddar, brutal in their natures, and ferocious in their manners. They began by suspecting we should make our fortunes by selling their children as slaves. No constable would venture to arrest a Shipham man, lest he should be concealed in one of their pits, and never heard of more; no uncommon case.

Notwithstanding the lawless, abandoned state of these people, they have a worthy curate, who faithfully discharged his duty to them; but poor, and unassisted by any person of even tolerable affluence, he had gained over their minds nothing but a great respect for his own person; yet they were totally unconvinced by his doctrines, though these were truly evangelical. A house and teachers, always the first pursuit, began now to occupy our time and thoughts. We heard in a tea-circle that a young woman, a poor farmer's daughter, who was employed in the laborious work of a dairy, had, from the love of doing good, and a great desire of instructing the ignorant, raised a little Sunday-school of her own poor neighbours, and had actually collected thirty poor children, and from her little pittance bought books and provided rewards of gingerbread for those who improved most. "Blush, grandeur, blush!"

We mounted our horses, and went in pursuit of this girl the next day. We found her milking her cow

She appeared to be about one-and-twenty, She performed all the offices of a farmer's servant.

All we had heard we were now convinced was true, and even fell short of this girl's usefulness. She possessed a good understanding, had received a better education than commonly falls to the lot of people in her station, could read and write very prettily, was deeply serious, and seemed pretty well acquainted with the Scriptures. She spoke with great affection of a half-sister, who lived dairy-maid with a farmer at some distance, younger than herself. The rector of Shipham had claimed the tithes for fifty years, but had never catechised a child or preached a sermon for forty. The parsonage-house was fitted up by him for us. In September 1790, we opened a Sunday and day-school for the united parishes of Rowberrow and Shipham, with one hundred and forty children; and Patience Seward and Flower Waite, the two farmers' maids, were engaged as mistresses; and if ever the blessing of Heaven was implored by two young hearts to protect and direct them, it proceeded, I believe, from these two young creatures, whom we took some pains to instruct in our method and manner of teaching.

William Wokey, an upright moral man, was engaged to teach the Rowberrow boys, and John Morgan, a farmer's son, those of Shipham.

[In a letter to Mrs Kennicott, written just about this time, Mrs H. More thus alludes to this stage of their proceedings:—"I have hired an old vicarage-house which has had no inhabitant these hundred years, and

in this I propose to place some pious and knowing people to instruct the poor, who are more vicious and ignorant than I could have conceived possible in a country which calls itself Christian. The vicar, who lives a long way off, is repairing the house for me, and as he is but ninety-four years old, he insists on my taking a lease, and is as rigorous about the rent as if I were taking it for an assembly-room. It will take some time to put this in order, but next Sunday we are to open a smaller school, a sort of detachment from these head-quarters; and as all these villages are from six to ten miles distance from me, you will believe I am not a little engaged. I am not apt to be very sanguine in my expectations, but I comfort myself with remembering that we have nothing to do with *events*; and, indeed, the uncommon prosperity we have at Cheddar ought to encourage us. We have a great number there who could only tell their letters when they began, and can already read their Testament, and not only say the Catechism, but give pertinent answers to any questions which involve the first principles of Christianity, but then the ability and piety of the teachers we have there surpass what we can expect to find again. I should not enlarge upon these circumstances so much to anybody else, but I know you like these Goody-two-shoes details. Besides, if there were any merit (I hate the Popish word) in these little schemes it is not mine, for I have little money, and if I had much, I should too probably spend it as those who have a great deal commonly do.

"Patty has had a wretched summer, in almost constant pain."

The last statement will enable the reader to appreciate the better the self-denying labours of the author of our journal—self-denying had she been in vigorous health, and how emphatically more so when "in almost constant pain!"

In a subsequent letter of Mrs Hannah to the same correspondent, she observes—

"We have often agreed that

"To mend the world's a vast design;"

and I am convinced of the truth of this by the difficulties attending the half-dozen parishes we have undertaken. It is grievous to reflect, that while we are sending missionaries to our distant colonies, our own villages are perishing for lack of instruction. I am deeply convinced how very poor and inadequate any miserable attempts of mine can be to rectify so wide-spread an evil, yet I could not be comfortable till something was attempted. We have, therefore, established schools and various little institutions over a tract of country of ten or twelve miles, and have near five hundred children in training. As the land is almost pagan, we bring down persons of great reputation for piety from other places, and the improvements are great for the time. But how we shall be able to keep up these things amidst so much opposition, vice, poverty, and ignorance as we have to deal with, I cannot guess."]

Whilst this new undertaking was forwarding, our

Cheddar plans succeeded beyond expectation. The Sunday-evening meetings appeared particularly blessed. A poor girl from Draycot, of the most profligate, and even diabolical conversation, was deeply struck. She came to Mrs Baber with a heart oppressed with sorrow, and shewing an abhorrence of her own life ; she asked, in an agony, for instruction and direction. It is now many months since this took place, and her desire to lead a better life still increases. Her conversation is totally changed ; and her eagerness to be able to read the New Testament is quite pleasing. She lives two miles from the school, but no weather ever detains her. About the same time another beautiful young creature, about eighteen, was deeply afflicted with a dropsy. Under pretence of carrying something good to eat, Mrs Baber gained admittance to their cottage. She ingratiated herself by degrees with the girl, and, in time, they came to close conversation. After she had explained to her the Christian scheme, " Oh ! " exclaimed the girl, " Jesus Christ will be very unreasonable if He expects anything of me, for I never heard of Him in my life." A desperate quack-doctor made an attempt to relieve this poor girl, and succeeded for a time. On her recovery, a neighbour observed to her, she supposed her first visit, if she had any gratitude, would be to Ma'am Baber. " No," she returned, with some spirit, " it will be my *second* ; my first will be to church." This young creature continues sober and well disposed, never misses church, and is constant at the evening readings. Numbers of old people now attend, are

grateful for the opportunity, very attentive, very thankful, and often very much affected.

Whilst we were receiving great comfort from Cheddar, and anxiously watching our young people at Shipham, we had prepared to open a couple of Sunday-schools at Sandford and Banwell. Sandford is a little hamlet in the parish of Windscombe. Nancy Keene, a sober-minded young woman, the friend and neighbour of our Shipham mistresses, was strongly recommended. With some teaching, we found her pretty equal to the undertaking. However, we were obliged to be saddled with her dull husband for a master; but, sensible of his deficiencies, she was doubly diligent, and worked for both, and we opened a little school in their cottage, of about sixty.

A few weeks after, every thing was ready at Banwell. Nelly Spenser, a young married woman, was recommended to us by the apothecary's wife, who informed us she had lived in her family as nurse-maid some years. When she was but fourteen years of age, her mistress could venture from home for a week, and leave this young creature with the charge of her little children, and the care of her family. An old mother taught her to read, and here ended her education; but her love of books was so great, she would procure them from her master's study, and, rather than not read, she would amuse herself with medical books. She was very early, and deeply, impressed with religious thoughts. She married, when very young, John Spenser, a very poor man, but a most excellent character. When a

boy, his favourite companion was very wicked, as he confesses that he himself was ; but at length, tired of his way of life, and weary of breaking so many Sabbaths, he told his companion he had formed a resolution to leave off his evil ways, and become better, and advised him to do the same. They were soon separated—Spenser fell into good hands, and became a convert ; his companion into bad, and still continues wicked. Nelly Spenser was soon brought to be a good Sunday-school mistress, and to teach the children very well. As to Sandford, the distance from church, being above two miles, and many other concurring circumstances, make us doubt our ability of continuing it long ; but if one child catches a *text* of Scripture which may hereafter strike upon her heart in the hour of affliction, it may be well the attempt was made at Sandford.

I am now advanced in my journal another year, and arrived at the summer of 1791. The success we had hitherto enjoyed in these villages encouraged us exceedingly to make further inquiries for more ignorant parishes. We were not long in seeking. Congresbury was the first which presented itself ; the ignorance of the poor was sufficiently pointed out to us to stimulate us to further inquiries. We made a visit, and found the poor divided into two classes—the very poor, and what is called gentleman farmers, wealthy, unfeeling, and hard ; and, though not in the same state of *barbarity* with our other villages, yet quite as far from *Christianity*. We were received with great respect.

They had the good manners to attend us, when the parents came as usual to be examined, and their names set down. Two of them were at the opening, and they agreed that the master and mistress should bring any very heavy complaints of the children to *them*, that *our* time might be spent in regulating their improvement. This sort of civility was quite new to us. We were obliged to content ourselves with a master and mistress we found in the village, who kept a school. They were active and industrious, but in no other way suitable to us; but we had no alternative, and we were obliged to leave the children to the care of Mr and Mrs Turner, who will probably instruct them to the extent of their knowledge, which I suspect to be very moderate.

[About this time, as it appears from Mr Wilberforce's journal, he paid a visit to Cowslip Green, and it may easily be conceived with what pleasurable feelings a heart such as his must have been filled when he was himself an eye-witness of the progress of that blessed work which had been begun at his suggestion, and carried on under his patronage. The entry in his journal is as follows:—

“July 2.—Off betimes for Cowslip Green. Arrived there by the afternoon. Henry Thornton came at night.

“July 3, Sunday.—Early for Shipham, where church, and one hundred and fifty children. On to Cheddar, where Mrs Baber's reception, her sudden turning her joy into a right channel, and calling on the children to sing ‘Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,’ much

affected me. Church—catechising—sermon read, and Mrs Baber's moving address. The Miss Mores are indeed excellent women, and it seems as if God would prosper their benevolent intentions.”]

We had long promised the old schools a dinner, as a bribe for good behaviour during our absence, and the prospect of the feast, as they called it, was a charm so captivating, that it procured many a task to be learned with pleasure, for the sake of obtaining one good dinner. On the 4th of August, on Callow Hill, a high part of Mendip, all our children were assembled (except the new schools—without them we had five hundred and seventeen). We left Cowslip Green in the morning, with some friends, mounted in a waggon, dressed out with greens, flowers, &c. Another followed with the servants, thirteen large pieces of beef, forty-five great plum-puddings, six hundred cakes, several loaves, and a great cask of cider. The children by order were concealed in a valley, whilst all the preparations were making, such as railing in a large piece of ground, and placing the dinner upon the grass to the best advantage. In the meantime we were arranging the children below. At the sound of the horn, the procession began. A boy of the best character carried a little flag; we walked next, then Ma'am Baber, followed by the Cheddar children, and so on according to seniority; all the schools, one after another, singing psalms. Upwards of four thousand people were assembled to see this interesting sight. After marching round our little railing, all were seated in pairs as they walked.

The dinner was then carved, and each child had laid at his feet a large slice of beef, another of plum-pudding, and a cake. The instant they were served, all arose, and six clergymen, who were present, said grace. All were again seated, and were permitted to eat as much as their stomachs would hold, and talk as fast as their tongues would go. When the children were properly feasted, and the company had regaled themselves with their leavings, grace was said again, when some little examination into their acquirements took place. One girl could repeat twenty-four chapters, another fifteen; and many questions put to them, which were answered to the satisfaction of the company, and to the credit of the children. As the design of the day was to prove to them the possibility of being *merry and wise*, we all joined in singing "God save the King," and amusing them by a little mirthful chat. At four o'clock all the pleasure was over, and the children marched out of the circle in the order they entered, each school headed by their master and mistress, singing psalms and hallelujahs, till they were lost in the valley. Thus were five hundred and seventeen children, and three hundred others, made happy, and really feasted for the sum of £15.

[It may not be unwelcome to the reader to be presented with a shorter narrative of this interesting celebration from the pen of Mrs Hannah. It occurs in a letter addressed to Mrs Kennicott:—

"I have kept this scrawl some days for want of time to finish it—so busy have we been in preparing for a

grand celebrity, distinguished by the pompous name of *Mendip Feast*—the range of hills, you remember, in this country—on the top of which we yesterday gave a dinner of beef and plum-pudding and cider, to our schools. There were not quite six hundred children ; for I would not admit the new schools, telling them that they must be good for a year or two, to be entitled to so great a thing as a dinner. We had two tents pitched on the hill. Our cloth was spread around, and we were enclosed in a fence, within which, in a circle, the children sat. We all went in waggons, and carried a large company of our own to carve for the children, who sang psalms very prettily in the intervals. Curiosity had drawn a great multitude, for a country so thinly peopled. One wondered whence five thousand people, for that was the calculation, could come. I was very uneasy at seeing this, lest it should disturb the decorum of the festivity. Almost all the clergy of the neighbourhood came, and I desired a separate minister to say grace to each parish. At the conclusion, I permitted a general chorus of ‘God save the King,’ telling them I expected that loyalty should make a part of their religion. We all parted with the most perfect peace, having fed about nine hundred people for less than a *fine* dinner for twenty costs. The day was the finest imaginable, and we got home safe, and, I hope, thankful, about eight miles, in our waggons.”]

About this time, in a wretched parish poor-house, at Rowberrow, we found, almost starving, but extremely clean, a poor woman, deeply serious, and well acquainted

with the Scriptures. Her opportunities and information were from Mr Jones, curate of Shipham, a truly pious man. In a cottage very near this place, was likewise another poor creature in a bad state of health, but in a very satisfactory state of mind, brought about by the visits of the above-mentioned Nancy Adams from the poor-house, who had really been the means (under God) of reforming a profligate girl, and of leading her to repentance; so that here was all outward appearance of a righteous deathbed, of a sinner dying full of hope, and trusting in the merits of a Redeemer—a very striking instance of the importance of preaching the gospel. By this means were these two wretched creatures, in the lowest obscurity, and almost in the greatest want, brought to the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

About the latter end of August, we formed a design of inquiring into the parish of Yatton, adjoining Congresbury. Mr Wylde was the resident curate. A wealthy parish, some gentry, and many farmers; but from neither had he ever been able to raise any subscription for a Sunday-school. He appeared very glad to receive us, and a morning was fixed for our seeing and examining the people. For our better accommodation we were introduced into the vestry, and some respectable people attended, assisted in taking down names, &c., and very civilly, indeed, took upon themselves the principal trouble. One interesting event I cannot pass over. A creditable farmer presented to us seven sons, very fine boys, and well instructed in their Catechism, &c. The children were extremely interesting;

but the *father* was the phenomenon—a pious farmer, well behaved and sensible. He told us he had three more fine children at home, but too young to attend. When this little preparatory ceremony was over, we took leave. The instant we left the church, the bells were set a-ringing, and the whole village seemed all gaiety and pleasure. That their spirits were exhilarated upon so important an occasion was particularly agreeable. The civil behaviour was extremely new to us. The Sunday after, Mr Wylde preached a sermon upon the occasion, so affecting as to make his auditors weep. We were not there; but the following Sunday we opened the school, with one hundred and thirty children, of a more decent order than any we had been accustomed to see. Mr Wylde attended the ceremony, and himself read our usual chapter, psalms, and prayer, with much earnestness. We procured a mistress from the village, a respectable woman, and of a grave, not to say religious, turn of mind. Her first sense of seriousness, was owing, I believe, to what she suffered from a drunken, bad husband. The two masters, decent men, but no more. Here lies the heavy part of our difficulty.

The latter end of this summer we made an experiment for the evening reading. The people were much struck with it, and came in crowds, and conducted themselves with the greatest decorum. Many shewed signs of improvement and pleasure; and if any came to scoff, perhaps, spite of themselves, they may remain to pray. We opened with seventy auditors, and they are

now increased to one hundred—men and women, of all ages and descriptions, sitting with great decency, and many with apparent humility, to be instructed by two young creatures taken from their cow. Is this the power of the gospel or not? What is worthy observation, the singers and ringers (not commonly the soberest men in a parish) attend at each place where we have a reading; and at Shipham they have changed their night of ringing in the week, as it interfered, and prevented their attendance.

To prevent the stupid and ruinous idea of Methodism possessing the minds of the people, and interrupting this little prospect of doing good, Mr and Mrs Jones occasionally attend.

We have been the whole summer attempting to do something for the wretched, beggarly town of A——, but such labour, such difficulty, and such torment, we had scarcely met with even at Cheddar: *there*, the people ignorant and stupid—*here*, the mind much in the same state, with the addition of dress and luxury. An unfeeling, hard-hearted corporation was to us a totally new scene, and how to begin the canvass puzzled us extremely.

We waited first on the vicar, Mr G——, but the black shades of his character are too melancholy even to be sketched here. He was civil to us, and attended us to several of the corporation who were of his party—the town being all anarchy and malice, and pretty equally divided in enmity. However, our cause compelled us to be equally civil and attentive to each party. It is a

very poor place indeed, yet the luxury of this body corporate is so great, that at their annual festivals they never admit to their table a vulgar joint of meat. This was the first attempt that was entirely disagreeable ; however, the distresses and ignorance of the poor called the louder for support and instruction. There is no describing the ignorance and impertinence of these wretched people ; yet, as usual, we received great personal civility, and one and all declared they had *no objection to the school*. In September we opened, with upwards of a hundred poor, little, dirty, wretched-looking creatures, half starved amidst the voluptuous eating of this *ancient corporation*, as they style themselves. We procured a master and mistress from the town—merely decent people, but nothing better presented. About this time we had a new curate at Cheddar, Mr Boake, an amiable and promising young man. He lived at Axbridge, and was present at the opening of our school in that place. He is much interested in the success of our schools, particularly in these two places. Our children at Cheddar were now catechised in the church, which gave us great pleasure.

During the summer, at different times, we had been making occasional visits at Nailsea, a village at eight miles distance, and singularly situated in the midst of a thicket, producing great quantities of coal. Here were two glass-houses, and numbers of profligate poor drawn thither from these circumstances ; so that we found it abounding in sin and wickedness, the usual consequences of glass-houses and mines ; and when we

cast our eyes round, and meditated on the great singularity of its situation, we could not help thinking it would become our little Sierra Leone.

We proposed to them a school. The heads of the parish assembled; and, though very ignorant, yet there was something in them we did not dislike, particularly in the behaviour of two or three.

They were uncommonly struck and delighted at our coming, and, not having a house suited to our purpose, called a parish meeting, and proposed even to build one rather than lose us. This was very gratifying. On the first of October, we went in great parade to Nailsea. The heads of the parish all met in their best clothes; and after Mr Baddely (a clergyman who lived in the parish) had, with due solemnity, all standing with heads uncovered, begged a blessing upon the undertaking, I laid the first stone, placing under it the following inscription:—

SEPTEMBER 30TH, 1791,
WITH AN HUMBLE RELIANCE ON THE
BLESSING OF ALMIGHTY GOD,
THIS LITTLE BUILDING WAS BEGUN,
WITH A SINCERE DESIRE
TO PROMOTE HIS GLORY,
TO BENEFIT THE PARISH OF NAILSEA,
IN ITS MOST IMPORTANT INTEREST,
THE EDUCATING THE RISING GENERATION
IN THE KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE
OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

Soon after we were much affected with a scene at Yatton church. Our favourite farmer, who brought his seven sons, lost his wife in child-bed, and he led a long family procession in deep mourning up the church,

carrying the infant in his arms. When it was over, we had some conversation with him, and were happy witnesses to the power of religion, which had supported this man in a most wonderful manner through such trying moments. He ended his conversation by saying, that notwithstanding all he had suffered, he was enabled not only to submit to the will of God on this trying occasion, but to praise Him.

In the same week we had likewise cause for much rejoicing. Our favourite Mr Jones had, through the active interference and perseverance of Hannah, been presented to the living of Shiphham by the Dean and Chapter of Wells. This was a subject for great joy, as, besides a certain though small provision for his family, we had him secured to our schools, where he had so conscientiously discharged his duty. I wish ever to remember two small circumstances on the occasion. We had the pleasure of carrying Mr Newton to preach at Shiphham while the living was depending. The singers, expecting it was the new rector, who would rob Mr Jones of the chance of succeeding, took their hats, and left the church in disgust. I record this to Mr Jones' honour, as he could never have had a shilling to distribute among them, and, contrary to their feelings, had always given them serious conversation, and preached upon evangelical principles. The second circumstance was this: a poor man, reduced almost to starving, and one of our poor pensioners at a shilling a-week, desired on the day of induction his shilling might be stopped for one week, and given to the

ringers, that he might hear the sound of the bells on so joyful an occasion.

[It is perhaps almost needless to observe that the Mr Newton referred to above was that eminent servant of Christ, the Rev. John Newton. In a letter dated July 1791, he had promised to extend a journey he was contemplating by a visit to Cowslip Green—a proposal which was very cordially responded to on the part of Mrs More. In the course of her reply, she hinted to her venerable correspondent that she had some missionary work to put him to whilst he sojourned in her house :—" Pray, let me know what time you intend to bestow upon us—the more the better. I hope you will do some good in this dark region, where the light of Christianity seems scarcely to have penetrated. We are sending missionaries to our colonies, while our villages are perishing for lack of instruction. You will hardly believe the things you will see and hear in this neighbourhood."

Mr Newton passed a week at Cowslip Green, during which, as appears from Mrs Martha's journal, his hostesses did not fail to draw upon his services, and to give him some appropriate employment.

So exhilarated was he with his visit, that, in the letter which soon followed his departure, he prefaces his prose with a poetical effusion :—

" In Helicon could I my pen dip,
I might attempt the praise of Mendip ;
Were bards a hundred I'd outstrip 'em,
If equal to the praise of Shipham ;
But harder still the task, I ween,
To give its due to Cowslip Green."

In the letter which follows he thus alludes to the labours of love which he had witnessed and assisted in :—

“When I think of your turn of mind—what you give up, and to what hardships and fatigues, not to say dangers, you expose yourself for the instruction of the ignorant and the relief of the wretched, and especially knowing, as surely I *do* know, that the Lord whom you serve has given you the grace of humility, so that, far from valuing yourself upon your exertions, you can sit down at His feet, ashamed and sorry that you can do no more—I adore and praise Him who has put it into your heart, strengthens your hands, and has hitherto prepared your way. I am not often charged with flattery, and here I mean not to flatter, but to encourage you in the name of the Lord. He has highly honoured you, my dear madam ; He has allotted you a post of great importance, and for which, perhaps, no person in the kingdom has equal advantages with yourself. Zeal, perhaps, to attempt something in the same way might be found in many, but other requisites are wanting. If a prudent minister should attempt such an extensive inroad into the kingdom of darkness, he might expect such opposition as few could withstand ; but your sex and your character afford you a peculiar protection. They who would try to trample one of *us* into the dust will be ashamed openly to oppose *you*. I say *openly*—I believe you do not expect they will thank you, much less assist you. There are those who will probably shew their teeth, if they are not permitted to bite. But

you are prepared for consequences ; the Lord will be with you, and the blessing promised to those who appear decidedly on the Lord's side, and who are instrumental in turning many to righteousness, will make you ample amends for all that you may meet with of the unpleasant or unkind."

In a letter dated several years later he thus recurs to this much-enjoyed visit :—" I would be thankful that I ever saw you, and especially that I had the privilege of seeing you at Cowslip Green. I number that week among the happiest in my life. The recollection of it will be pleasant while I retain my memory. And ere long, I hope, we shall meet before the throne, and join in unceasing songs of praise to Him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood. There our joys will be unclouded, without interruption, abatement, or end ! *O præclarum diem !*"

The journal proceeds—]

Our farewell visit this year was attended with every circumstance calculated to strengthen faith and encourage industry. The school was increased to one hundred and sixty. A few very good boys. A girl about fourteen had requested Mrs Baber to lend her a Prayer-book to take home, and she could then read prayers to her father and mother, as well as say her own ; and it is a most comfortable fact that this child has brought her ignorant parents to attend her family prayer. We read a farewell sermon to a large audience, deeply attentive, and all expressing their gratitude in the most affecting, most interesting manner. This day

we left Shipham, Rowberrow, Axbridge, and Cheddar all full, and shewing strong marks of considerable improvement. Soon after, we took leave of Yatton, Sandford, Congresbury, and Banwell, leaving them full, and as prosperous as we could reasonably expect, all circumstances considered.

We made an attempt, and with a promise of success, to introduce morning and evening prayers at the poor-houses of Wrington, Rowberrow, Churchill, and Windcombe. We could not get it done at Shipham, for a sad reason—not one could read; but, alas! every one could, and did, swear. How far this will succeed we are yet to learn. What is very striking amongst the poor neglected creatures of these several poor-houses, we found one rather enlightened person in almost every house.

It is now the beginning of December 1791. We are preparing to leave all our schemes and schools for the winter. Many blessings have arisen this summer, sufficient to strengthen our faith; and many lost opportunities should confirm and strengthen our humility.

We have now taken in hand ten parishes, and have the care of near one thousand children. May our prayers reach the throne of grace for the Divine blessing upon all our undertakings; and may the favour of God descend on all who assist us in any way!

Bath.—A letter from Mrs Baber closes this year, filled with hope and comfort, and an increase of several children, and much good intelligence of the aged, par-

ticularly of poor Samuel, the Cheddar master, who hourly improves in religious knowledge, and has, from his own desires, introduced family prayer into his house. He invites his ignorant neighbours to partake of the opportunity, and several have accepted the offer, who, I hope, will soon be able to have them in their own houses.

I shall now wind up the year 1791 with the words of the Apostle—"May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen."

[It may be well to interrupt the thread of the journal at this place by the insertion of the following communication from Hannah More to Mr Wilberforce. It appears to be a sort of official statement, on her part, of the rise and progress of the Cheddar school; and though it repeats two or three particulars already given in the journal, yet it contains much new matter, and furnishes an answer to the interesting question, How were these schools conducted?

"MY DEAR SIR,—Perhaps it is the best answer to your question to describe the origin and progress of one of our schools, detached from the rest. And I select Cheddar, which you were the immediate cause of our taking up. After the discoveries made of the deplorable state of that place, my sister and I went and took a lodging at a little public-house there, to see what we could do, for we were utterly at a loss how to begin. We found more than two thousand people in the parish, almost all very poor; no gentry; a dozen

wealthy farmers, hard, brutal, and ignorant. We visited them all, picking up at one house (like fortune-tellers) the name and character of the next. We told them we intended to set up a school for their poor. They did not like it. We assured them we did not desire a shilling of them, but wished for their concurrence, as we knew they could influence their workmen. One of the farmers seemed pleased and civil. He was rich, but covetous, a hard drinker, and his wife a woman of loose morals, but good natural sense. She became our friend, sooner than some of the decent and the formal, and let us a house—the only one in the parish that was vacant—at £7 per annum, with a good garden. Adjoining was a large ox-house; this we roofed and floored, and, by putting in a couple of windows, it made a good school-room. While this was doing, we went to every house in the place, and found each a scene of the greatest ignorance and vice. We saw but one Bible in the whole parish, and that was used to prop a flower-pot. No clergyman had resided in it for forty years. One rode over twelve miles, from Wells, to preach once on a Sunday; but no weekly duty was done, or sick persons visited; and children were often buried without any funeral service. Eight people in the morning, and twenty in the afternoon, was a good congregation. We spent our whole time in getting at the characters of all the people, the employment, wages, and number of every family; and this we have done in our other nine parishes. On a fixed day, of which we gave notice in the church, all

the women, with all their children above six years old, met us. We took an exact list from their account, and engaged one hundred and twenty to attend on the following Sunday. A great many refused to send their children unless we would pay them for it! and not a few refused because they were not sure of my intentions, being apprehensive that, at the end of seven years, if they attended so long, I should acquire a power over them, and send them beyond sea. I must have heard this myself in order to have believed that so much ignorance existed out of Africa.

“While this was going on, we had set every engine to work to find proper teachers. On this everything depended. I had the happiness to find a woman of excellent natural sense, great knowledge of the human heart, activity, zeal, and uncommon piety. She had had a good fortune for one in middle life, but a wicked son had much reduced it. She had, however, still an estate of £40 a-year, or very nearly. She brought with her a daughter, twenty-five years old, quite equal to herself in all other points—in capacity superior.

“It was winter, and we all met at the school on Sunday morning at nine o’clock, having invited many parents to be present at the opening. We had drawn up some rules, which were read, then some suitable portions of Scripture, part of the 34th Psalm, then a hymn sung, and then a prayer read, composed for the occasion.

“For the first year these excellent women had to struggle with every kind of opposition, so that they

were frequently tempted to give up their laborious employ. They well entitled themselves to £30 per annum salary, and some little presents. We established a weekly school of thirty girls to learn reading, sewing, knitting, and spinning. The latter, though I tried three sorts, and went myself to almost every town in the county, did not answer, partly from the exactions of the manufacturer, and partly from its not suiting the genius of the place. They preferred knitting after the school-hours on week-days. The mother or daughter visited the sick, chiefly with a view to their spiritual concerns; but we concealed the true motive at first; and, in order to procure them access to the houses and hearts of the people, they were furnished not only with medicine, but with a little money, which they administered with great prudence. They soon gained their confidence, read and prayed with them, and in all respects did just what a good clergyman does in other parishes.

“At the end of a year we perceived that much ground had been gained among the poor; but the success was attended with no small persecution from the rich, though some of them grew more favourable. I now ventured to have a sermon read after school on a Sunday evening, inviting a few of the parents, and keeping the grown-up children. The sermons were of the most awakening sort, and soon produced a sensible effect. It was at first thought a very Methodistical measure, and we got a few broken windows; but quiet perseverance, and the great prudence with which the zeal of our

good mistresses was regulated, carried us through. Many reprobates were, by the blessing of God, awakened, and many swearers and Sabbath-breakers reclaimed. The numbers both of young and old scholars increased, and the daily life and conversation of many seemed to keep pace with their religious profession on the Sunday.

“ We now began to distribute Bibles, Prayer-books, and other good books, but never at random, and only to those who had given some evidence of their loving and deserving them. Those who manifest the greatest diligence get the books of most importance. During my absence in the winter, a great many will learn twenty or thirty chapters, psalms, and hymns. At the end of three years, during the winter the more serious of the parents began to attend on a Wednesday night, and on Tuesday nights twenty or thirty young people of superior piety met at the school to read the Scriptures and hear them explained.”]

CONTINUATION OF THE SCHOOL JOURNAL,

BEGINNING THE YEAR 1792.

THIS year opened with a very good account of Cheddar; the school increased to one hundred and sixty-eight. Much comfort for Mrs Baber among the grown-up children. As great desires were expressed for further instruction, besides that given on a Sunday, this induced them to think of an evening in the week for great boys and girls, when several regularly attend, and Miss Baber reads and explains the Scriptures. All were very attentive, and the number soon increased. This was succeeded by a most agreeable surprise—a letter from Banwell, with intelligence of a full school. This news was as unexpected as agreeable, the country lying so much under water; but John and Nelly Spenser are as indefatigable as they are pious. This was immediately followed by favourable news from Shipham, and pretty good from Rowberrow—the weekly meeting of the former making considerable progress. The family prayer in the poor-houses goes on well. All have attended cheerfully twice a-day, except one woman, who came with the rest for her promised reward at Christmas, of a shilling, a piece of beef, and some pease; but our friend, on inquiry, found

she had never attended once. On being asked the reason, she replied, "I did not come to prayers because I thought 'twas *Wesleying*." So, as she refused the benefit of prayer, she was denied the pleasure of beef; yet we will hope this woman will come, though at the eleventh hour, from a higher motive than either meat or pease. The three schools which we feared were left under the direction of mere morality, go on, however, well, and are all full. Providence, I doubt not, in *His* time (though we generally choose things in our own), will provide spiritual teachers for us in these places. Nay, so particularly has this part of our work been under His immediate direction, that I verily believe the fact of there being only moral masters and mistresses has been one reason of our success; for had the knowledge of Christ been taught to the children by any but ourselves, in these three places, it is to be feared the ignorance and pride of the people would not have endured it; therefore God's ~~will~~ be done, and may the morality soon become spirituality. This year opens so prosperously that it should strengthen faith. We have the particular prayers of so many pious souls for the success of our schools, that it should encourage us humbly to hope for their prosperity.

At the beginning of February, we went to Nailsea, and opened the long-promised school there. We had engaged Mr and Mrs Younge from Bath, a couple so well recommended for religious zeal and industry, that we have every reason to raise our expectations upon solid grounds. We had not the whole number we engaged,

on account of a day's fall of snow, that rendered the roads almost impassable. From their former behaviour at Nailsea, we expected to be warmly received, and were not disappointed. Bell-ringing, and much rejoicing appeared through the whole village. All passed off well.

We returned to Bath full of hopes and fears. About three weeks after we received our first intelligence. It was *rather* flattering than not; the children attended pretty well. Mr John Coombes taught them the first Sunday after we left it, the whole day, and read a sermon to them in the evening. This is a farmer who, from the first beginning, we had hopes might prove a subject for conversion. Possessed of a warm heart, high passions, given to strong vices, and likewise disposed to many virtues, his good and evil propensities seemed equally great, without a friend to alarm him by the threatenings, or allure him by the promises of the gospel. We had a strong propensity to assist this poor man, perceiving likewise that he had a good understanding. I wrote him a long letter, and accompanied it with "The Rise and Progress." He was affected with both. How far his *heart* may be touched will be shewn hereafter; but of this we were assured, he left off swearing and drinking for some weeks. We continued hearing pretty favourable accounts till the beginning of May, when H. being in London, I made my first appearance in the country, opening with the grand tour. Shipham is first in order. From the integrity of Mr and Mrs Jones, we had everything to

hope. The children are a stupid race, but making as much progress as might reasonably be expected, and all the advances suitable to their ages and understandings. There is an old woman who was very deeply struck at one of the evening meetings. She came to the mistresses in a most agonising way, and has gone through a long process of difficulties and sufferings. She is now beginning to taste the *pleasures* in the *promises* of the gospel, and to find it has brought her indeed glad tidings. There are others carrying the marks of considerable seriousness, and the audience still coming with pleasure, and conducting themselves with gravity.

Axbridge was next in rotation. Here we left some of the moral teachers, and here we found them. However, they had strictly adhered to integrity, and the children were really improved in Catechism, singing psalms, questions and answers from books, &c. The number likewise increased. Mr Boake had faithfully discharged his promises; and Mr Gould, the rector, had actually stood by while the children were catechised. They had been permitted to sing once in the church, and the corporation, by joint subscription, had given them gingerbread twice. Our wildest flights of imagination never soared so high.

And now for Cheddar. Cheddar never fails to bring some comfort of a spiritual nature, whatever may be our torment in *temporals*. We found every department flourishing. Miss Baber's evening meetings were particularly successful. The simple and familiar style which

she adopted in explaining Scripture was proved by its results to be the right method ; as two grown-up lads, farmers' servants, appeared struck to the heart, and shewed truer marks of conversion than any we had met with before, except the Draycot girl. They have been now, for some months, exhibiting the deepest and most striking marks of spiritual distress, and have been known often to retire to a barn, during the dinner hour, for the purpose of prayer. Their conversation very striking! so humble, so solemn! This was indeed truly comfortable intelligence ; but, as a useful check to spiritual pride, at this very time the Draycot girl discovered some signs of falling off. Satan had been busy, and in some degree succeeded. However, we have still much to hope. God grant that His grace may finally defeat all Satan's temptations in this poor girl's heart! What rendered the case of these lads the more extraordinary was, they were servants to two people on whom we had strongly fixed our hopes that they would be humble means, in the hands of Providence, of being useful to us some time or other. Whether the accounts of the instruction which these lads had received from the school affected the master and mistress, we cannot tell ; however, it was by the direction of a gracious Being they were desirous of attending at this time. To see these two reputable people mix with the poor upon such an occasion was a great stroke, and well worth all the pains that had been taken. Mrs Gilling told us a little history of her desires to come, and of the small occurrences she at

first suffered to hinder her. She has, at length, surmounted the whole, and will not even be detained to make tea for her husband's company, which at first she did, not having courage to stand their ridicule. She possesses a soft nature, but is passionate. Her account of herself is interesting. Mrs Baber inquired how it was that her husband, who disliked these things, permitted her to come. "Oh," said she, "he sees the quickness of my temper so much mended, he can have no objection." It seems as though this first-fruit will ripen. She told us she was always thinking of good things, and can't do now what she used to do on many occasions.—Farmer Ford, our other promising subject, has a fine, noble disposition. He is of an ancient family in Cheddar, but reduced somewhat in his circumstances. Poor man! I believe his struggles were considerable before he persevered in constant attendance. He appeared to desire it at first, but Satan stepped in and supplied him with excuses for a long time. At length his good resolutions surmounted the fear of man and the jibes of his brother farmers, and at present he is a constant attendant. We were much affected and distressed when we first accosted him. However, what passed was cause of great comfort, and it appears that we may with safety augur some good. When the whole was over, an old woman seized my hands, in an agony of tears; it was with difficulty she could be restrained from prostrating herself upon the earth. "O madam! this house has saved my soul! I have found Christ crucified!"—she continued in agitated

exclamations. There was nothing to be said here ; she appeared to be in full possession of the whole secret. May the power of Satan be daily lessened in her heart !

When the whole was over, I put it home to Mrs Baber, as in the sight of God, to say what was her real opinion respecting the state of the poor people's minds at Cheddar. She very solemnly assured me, she believed upwards of twenty were under the deepest convictions, and as many more in a hopeful way. Our prosperity at present has sometimes gained us the appellation of Methodists ; yet we learn we still stand well with the principal people, who have not yet surmounted the wonder of gentlefolks coming to do good among strangers.

The Draycot children, remarkable for regular attendance in all weathers, though two miles distant, were now, as well as their parents, offered a high bribe for *non-attendance*. Mrs S——, a great lady of the village, threw out the temptation of a glass of gin to any person every time they kept from the school, and used her lawful power by not suffering her servant boy to attend, who had hitherto been constant, and who was grieved at the disappointment. The gin was firmly rejected at first, but we fear has had some influence since.

To our no small surprise, the Banwell and Sandford schools flourish tolerably ; this is a great proof of the excellency of the teachers. Indeed they are very superior persons, and well instruct their poor, little, ignorant set, meeting likewise with many little discouragements from the place.

Yatton and Congresbury go on well as to numbers, and pretty well as to book-learning; but nothing of a spiritual nature opens upon us yet. However, the time has been but short.

We look forward to Nailsea as a second Cheddar, and find Mr and Mrs Younge sensible and active, and capable, if they exert themselves conscientiously, of doing much good. The children here, to our great surprise, are sharp and quick to learn. In two-and-twenty weeks a very large number can read the Bible fluently, and some are beginning to understand and taste it in a small degree. Our school at present is collected chiefly from the poor—inferior farmers and colliers.

We now made our appearance, for the first time, among the glass-house people, and entered nineteen houses in a row (little hovels), containing in all near two hundred people. Whatever we had seen before was of a different nature, and, though we had encountered savages, hard-hearted farmers, little cold country gentry, a supercilious and ignorant corporation, yet this was still new, and unlike all other things—not only differing from all we had seen, but greatly transcending all we had imagined. Both sexes and all ages herding together; voluptuous beyond belief. The work of a glass-house is an irregular thing, uncertain whether by day or by night; not only infringing upon man's rest, but constantly intruding upon the privileges of the Sabbath. The wages high, the eating and drinking luxurious—the body scarcely covered, but fed with dainties of a shameful descrip-

tion. The high buildings of the glass-houses ranged before the doors of these cottages—the great furnaces roaring—the swearing, eating, and drinking of these half-dressed, black-looking beings, gave it a most infernal and horrible appearance. One, if not two, joints of the finest meat were roasting in each of these little hot kitchens, pots of ale standing about, and plenty of early, delicate-looking vegetables. We had a gentleman with us who, being rather personally fearful, left us to pursue our own devices, which we did by entering and haranguing every separate family. We were in our usual luck respecting personal civility, which we received even from the worst of these creatures, some welcoming us to “Botany Bay,” others to “Little Hell,” as they themselves shockingly called it. We talked to them a great deal, and indeed they all listened, and some with great, and I may add with truth, delighted attention. We were too prudent in this first visit to drop a word that did not imply something creditable—making good servants, getting top places, going out into the world, &c. Religion here would have been a very indiscreet, and, I fear, unsuccessful beginning. However, before we left them, we obtained the promise of twenty-seven children; and many of them were as good as their word. *One* woman assured us her husband went constantly to church, and she drew up her head and looked proud of belonging to so much worth; but this was the only instance of piety we met with. These are melancholy scenes for hours of reflection.

We now made our appearance at Shipham on a

Thursday at the evening readings, which had kept up tolerably for a twelvemonth. We were received with great apparent pleasure, and treated with the highest respect. We read ourselves, first some portion of Scripture, then a sermon and prayer, and concluded with a psalm. Their attention was really great, and after a few evenings we flattered ourselves we discovered some marks (though very small) of a little seriousness in some, and when any particular passage was explained, they were rather more alive, and a little more awakened. Ever so small a glimmering here we seize on in a moment. About this time we began to collect the great collier boys at Nailsea, and some great girls for evening meetings. They were very much ashamed at first. We gave them every encouragement of coaxing and personal attendance, and indeed found very considerable promise in a few weeks. The colliers are abundantly more human than the people of the glass-houses.

It is now August, and we are not satisfied with Yatton, and much dissatisfied with Congresbury; but the former far surpassing the latter. The children we think are not sufficiently brought forward, though many seem to have capacities; but yet abundantly humanised, if not Christianised, from what we found them.

We now began to occupy our thoughts in planning clubs for poor women; the men in this, as in most other things, having the advantage of such comforts. Rowberrow and Shipham we took in hand first, from an idea of their having the fewest resources in time of

sickness. At one of the evening readings we named it to them. It was indeed received with much pleasure by the women, and many smiles by the men. H. was the legislator of this new society.

[Mrs Hannah More has herself given some account of her legislation in this matter in a letter addressed to Mr Wilberforce. She says—

“Finding the wants and distresses of these poor people uncommonly great (for their wages are but 1s. per day), and fearing to abuse the bounty of my friends by too indiscriminate liberality, it occurred to me that I could make what I had to bestow go much further, by instituting clubs or societies for the women, as is done for men in other places. It was no small trouble to accomplish this; for, though the subscription was only three halfpence a-week, it was more than they could always raise; yet the object appeared so important, that I found it would be good economy privately to give widows and other very poor women money to pay their club. After combating many prejudices, we carried this point, which we took care to involve in the general system, by making it subservient to the schools, the rules of the club restraining the women to such and such points of conduct respecting the schools. In some parishes we have one hundred and fifty poor women thus associated; you may guess who are the patronesses.

“We have an anniversary feast of tea, and I get some of the clergy, and a few of the better sort of people, to come to it. We wait on the women, who sit and enjoy

their dignity. The journal and state of affairs is read after church, and we collect all the facts we can as to the conduct of the villagers—whether the church has been more attended, fewer or more frauds, less or more swearing, scolding, or Sabbath-breaking. All this is produced for or against them in battle array, in a little sort of sermon, made up of praise, censure, and exhortation, as they may be found to have merited.

“One rule is, that any girl bred in the school, who continues, when grown up, to attend its instructions, and has married in the past year with a fair character, is presented, on this day, with five shillings, a pair of white stockings, and a new Bible; and several very good girls have received this public testimony to their virtuous conduct. Out of this club (to which we find it cheaper to contribute a few guineas than to give it at random) a sick woman receives three shillings a-week, seven shillings and sixpence for a lying-in, &c.”]

When her laws were made, and all things prepared, we had a general meeting; and a most noble opening presented itself for the inspection of human nature in a way we had no opportunity of doing previously. Those wretches, half-naked, and I believe some of them almost half-starved, had a long contention, with as much fury as they dared exhibit before us, declaring that they would rather relinquish the comforts and blessings of assistance at their lyings-in, to enrich the stock and procure a handsome funeral; and I myself heard a Rowberrow woman declare—“What did a poor woman work hard for, but in hopes she should be put out of

the world in a tidy way?" This was a pitch of absurdity almost beyond bearing, if one's own lost opportunities did not give a check to impatience, and enable one to endure and submit to their folly and stupidity. However, we carried the point, that the woman in the hour of increasing her family should be assured of the comforts of caudle, &c. ; and they agreed, that a separate sixpence each at the time of a death would amply assist the poor family, and the stock not be impoverished. To this we could have no objection. One article mentioned in the rules gave universal satisfaction—namely, that on the day any young woman married, who had been bred in the school, and was of a good character, if she produced a paper to this effect, signed by the minister of the parish, she should have for her marriage portion, a pair of white worsted stockings of our own knitting, five shillings, and a Bible. To this, I must confess, there was not the shadow of an objection, but a universal smile graced their ferocious countenances. Another circumstance likewise gave great satisfaction. To prevent, as mentioned in the articles, the indecency of women appearing at a public-house, the presidents promised to give tea and cakes on the annual day of meeting ; and for this we were indulged with another smile. In the beginning of September, when we met this dainty collection of females, we had also a party of friends with us ; and we marched off to church, in a procession of about one hundred and forty, all distinguished by a blue breast-knot, the ladies in white, and many of the savages in white also ; the

whole preceded by the Sunday-school children. The bells were set a-ringing, the singers assembled, and a band of musicians very gallantly stepped forward, and played "God save the King" before us. After service was over, and Mr Jones had preached a sermon, we returned in the same order, dismissing the younger part of the company, with each a good plum-tart to comfort them. After tea (during which, to do them justice, they all behaved incomparably, and I believe this day's associating with their betters, as it is called, has brought them forward at least ten years in civilisation), we read them a little exhortation, explaining to them the contrast between their situations and blessings now, and what they were two years before. They have so little common sense, and so little sensibility, that we are obliged to beat into their heads continually the good we are doing them; and endeavouring to press upon them, with all our might, the advantages they derive from us. It is really true, and oftentimes it is with difficulty we can keep from downright laughing. Our day passed off to the wonder and astonishment of all beholders; but of none more than ourselves, who were only two years before actually persuaded very seriously not to enter the place, lest our persons should be endangered. May all tend to strengthen faith and promote zeal!

About three weeks after, we set on foot another plan of the same sort at Cheddar. In general, things passed much as at the other, not omitting the like interesting event of the funerals, that being the great bone of con-

tention here as at Shipham. About the middle of September was our day of procession. Mr Boake gave us a most suitable sermon, and we returned from church as we went, preceded by one hundred and fifty-eight children, who were also solaced with a good plum-tart. The rest of the company partook of tea, cakes, &c.; the little exhortation was read, with the same pains taken to assure them that we were doing them a great deal of good. However, it was well received. Many wept, and all were grateful enough to confess the truths it contained. We parted with great harmony, and mutual blessings and good wishes.

Our last visit at Yatton raised our spirits. The children now seem to be coming on, and giving evident signs of improvement. The clergyman and gentlemen of the neighbourhood have likewise entered into a little agreement for two of them constantly to attend alternately every Sunday, which they do, at least while the novelty lasts, with great regularity. They have likewise been round the parish, and made a collection towards clothing them. A liberal donation of ten guineas from one gentleman gave spirit to the business, and shamed the whole gentry and farmers into adding thirty more, so that many of the children will be clothed comfortably; and perhaps shame, if no higher motive, may, in time, produce something of the same kind in other parishes. We only presume to *wish*, we never *expect*—to prevent the unpleasant feeling of disappointment.

To our amazement, Axbridge comes on capitally; and if in time God should bless us with a couple of

spiritual teachers, we shall have much to hope. After this, begone, despair ! and hope may live for ever !

Our Shipham boys are now our principal trouble. They are very backward and very stupid ; a good complete scolding last Sunday I hope will produce good effects.

We have read the sermon ourselves almost the whole summer on a Thursday evening at Shipham, probably with a *little* success ; at least something seemed to be dawning the last time, for two or three appeared to be earnest to borrow Bibles. What cause of compassion this—*borrowing* Bibles at past fifty !

We have been so assured that Nailsea in time must work out a blessing, that, amidst harassings, torments, and teasings, we have never been low about it for an hour (at least *I* never have). Though the disappointments have been trying and agitating beyond expression, yet we have much cause for rejoicing at our perseverance hitherto.

The sun shines !—may it be the Sun of righteousness !—the Congresbury boys actually improve. In good time a gracious Providence will send us righteous teachers, and the Congresbury boys shall praise God with melody in their hearts.

The dreadful wet season had prevented our going to Nailsea for some time. At length we ventured through great dangers and perils. We found the school very promising. Mr Younge has, for some time, collected the great boys an evening in the week with a little success. They behave hitherto very well. No marks of any seriousness, but decency we esteem a great achieve-

ment. The late strike among the colliers for increase of wages had drawn away some of our great boys, who were obliged, though against their will, to join the common concern. This day, to our no small joy, we found them returned. It would create a smile in a fine gentleman or lady to behold our mutual pleasure on meeting; it was something quite transporting. Nailsea is but an infant colony, therefore we can only hope at present, but there is every reason that these hopes should be strong. We see great difficulties, but we likewise see great light. We bade adieu to this place for the present year, and it was well our affairs were settled. The roads being almost impassable, we were brought out of Nailsea by men on horseback, as well as on foot. The Sunday after we took leave of Yatton and Congresbury, both full and flourishing. The children very much improved, but more might be done had we better teachers.

The behaviour of the heads of these two parishes is now very striking, and will be a powerful lesson to strengthen our patience the remainder of our lives. To behold two great, ignorant farmers each Sunday sitting the whole day with people they oppress and trample on during the week, listening to these poor children, and those who are not quite brutes endeavouring to teach, and, when we appear, bowing to the earth, and teaching the children to be dutiful and grateful! One gentleman at Congresbury, bursting with his wealth and consequence, and purple with his daily bottle of port, was so affected and so delighted to hear the

answers the boys, by incessant labour, were at length able to give, and to hear us at last bestow a little praise, which was the first we could in conscience give, that, in an unguarded moment of rapture, he exclaimed, "Every boy and girl that do mind what the ladies do say I'll give twopence a-piece to!" This was a piece of generosity unknown in the family before. We left these two large schools with considerable satisfaction.

On the Sunday following, and the second of December, we bade a last farewell to the three great schools. Shipham, the particular care of the last two years, is now full. We found above one hundred and forty, all decently clothed, the girls highly improved, and the boys much mended during the last two months. There are many young women who now come constantly an evening in a week. They have religious conversation, a little of the Scriptures, sometimes "Pilgrim's Progress," or some good Lives. This is very attracting, and they are much delighted. Sometimes we surprise them with a dish of tea, in hopes to make it pleasant. Once or twice the mistresses thought they discovered some little seriousness in one or two, but nothing on which to ground much dependence; yet every little should strengthen hope.

Here we are also beginning to coax a few great boys to come in the week, but on a different night from the girls. Though we wish and pray for greater things, yet here we have yet no great cause of joy in regard to any spiritual discoveries. However, this school was never in so prosperous a way before. The people are

civilised, the school full, and the mistresses equal to the undertaking; the children improving, and the young women at least sober. We parted in some distress; the children's eyes full, and the teachers sobbing. Oh, may the blessing of Heaven go with them during the cold winter!

We found a good school at Axbridge; much regular, plain teaching, but nothing vital, nor any dawn or prospect of it. We are turning everything over in our minds, hoping somehow to get an exchange of mistresses, but nothing offers yet. We took leave of this school with good wishes and fervent desires, but nothing very sublime or tender in one's feelings here; yet that may come on likewise, and souls may be saved in Axbridge.

Cheddar we found more prosperous than we had ever seen before—one hundred and sixty children in the school, one hundred and seventy on the list—our great boys and girls still flourishing, still growing in grace. To see all these poor children in one room, crowding together, to hear the din of voices, to know what was going on, and the positive certainty that they were all training in the knowledge of the Scriptures, was a magnificent sight, though the children were ragged, and produced glorious feelings, though the expression fails. One of the oldest and most creditable farmers assured us that, three years ago, four or five women, and fourteen or fifteen men, comprised a common congregation; and that now, in the forenoon, they had often five hundred. They have erected new pews, and

are going to build more, not having seats enough to hold the congregation, as the church is frequently thronged. The most sanguine expectations could not have anticipated this, in so short a time. It by far surpassed all the intelligence, of every kind, we had ever received. The work has been strikingly progressive. The clergyman has been suddenly removed, and Mr Boake, who is a very amiable and active young man, placed there. We have great influence over him. At the same time he obtained the curacy of Axbridge; so that we have him at both our schools. He seems to be coming on, and is by much the most pleasing, not to say best, preacher we have in this part of the world. After spending a delightful afternoon, we took our leave for the winter, the children first singing a hymn upon the occasion. They all followed our chaise into the lane; and at length we parted with equal reluctance, mutually blessing and praying for each other. Oh, may the blessing of the Almighty shine upon them, not only during the winter, but to all eternity!

We were agreeably surprised, on our return, to find that the Nailsea savages, or *heads*, as they style themselves, had actually called a parish meeting, and entered into a little combination to appear, two of them, every Sunday at the school, to make inquiries, and hear complaints from the master, binding themselves in a shilling forfeit whenever they are absent. I say nothing of our astonishment, for this, too, is above all comment. Another little dawn for hope! These dawns, I believe, often appear, but we are dark, and cannot see them.

I forgot to mention that our Sandford mistress is very desirous of making the experiment in her village of collecting grown people an evening in the week, for the purpose of reading the Scriptures and a sermon. She is quite equal to the undertaking, and we may expect something from it.

Just before we are leaving Cowslip, a noble box of books arrives from Mr Hoare—a hundred Bibles, and as many Prayer-books. This has added abundantly to our stock, but it will more enrich his own. We were very much delighted this week with a dilemma of John Spenser, one of the most excellent of the human race, who went to Mr Jones, in real trouble of mind, to get him to decide upon a nice case. The *ladies* had promised the reward of a Bible to the boy who learned the most chapters, and, alas! he had two scholars who bid fair to learn fifty chapters each, and how could he possibly tell which boy ought to have the book? This was a case upon which we could quickly decide with rapture, and two Bibles are accordingly sent to Banwell.

We now bade adieu to the country, praising God for past blessings, praying for future, thanking Him for permitting our little services, and ashamed they have been so little.

The latter end of December.—A letter, giving an account of some of our poor-houses going on well, and of an increase of people attending family prayer, was matter for real pleasure, and a pleasant and grateful circumstance wherewith to wind up the year '92.

The close of a year is an awful consideration ! May we be enabled to wind it up with penitence for the past, particularly for every omission or neglect respecting the schools ! May we possess growing gratitude for the opportunities we have ! remembering to pray for increasing grace upon those who assist us with the means of our usefulness, that they, as well as ourselves, may be enabled to "fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life." Amen.

29th December 1792.

CONTINUATION OF THE SCHOOL JOURNAL,

BEGINNING THE YEAR 1793.

As David closes his Psalms, so should the journal of '93 open—"Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord;" and whenever there is cause for such an exclamation, should not doubts be done away, and faith be strengthened? May this be *our* case, for letters from all the schools give the most comfortable, not to say animating, intelligence. Nailsea, in its infant state, is doing more than we could reasonably expect; and Shipham and Cheddar rise triumphant. The first of these three places is improving; and as we find the young women rise above *decency*, therefore we may look forward to *spirituality*. Two or three discover some signs of a change; and a little girl gives promise both of talent and piety. Nay, even our abandoned school, as we call it, of the wicked and reprobate great boys leaves us not without hope, for who shall dare deliberately pronounce the word *abandoned* when free grace is offered, and they have only now heard the news?

Two more letters from Cheddar, just received, confirm the above intelligence, particularly of the extraordinary progress they are making in family as well as private

prayer, and of the continued piety and good lives of those who had last year made such a progress. Another letter from Shipham gives great hopes of our young women in the weekly school, and tells us of some girls being much affected in the Sunday-school.

March.—More good accounts from Cheddar. Luke Durbin and his wife, with whom much pains have been taken, and who continued in an unsubdued state, appear now much affected. Indeed, the woman (a violent spirit) shews at present strong symptoms of deep sorrow. This appears to have been the result of her hearing a good sermon read, by which she describes herself as being struck to the very heart. Indeed, she shews her faith already by her works. She keeps a little shop, is very poor, and has met with great misfortunes; and *though the demand for her little goods is greater on a Sunday than on any other day, yet, from principle, she rejects this opportunity.* The husband is of a quiet temper. We have had hopes of him for some time, but the natural man was so gentle, and the spiritual growth so slow, that we could hardly venture on any decision as to his case; but, poor man, if he had made the discovery, and ascertained the certainty, it was of much more consequence. There has been a little falling off—Will Clouter, and one or two others, having been drawn aside by strong temptation—but such shame and such repentance at their return to their duty, that perhaps it may be well the temptation happened.

But our great joy and pleasure, at the beginning of

- '93, is the apparent turning from a life of wickedness to a life of righteousness—in short, from sin to holiness—in the case of Mr Hyde, brother to the great man of the place, and our great persecutor. Profligate, abusive, depraved, this proud man—this haughty sinner—this gentleman of Cheddar—is brought to confess, with joy and gratitude, that “Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners,” and he is likewise brought to confess this truth amidst a congregation of poor people, over whom he has power, and over whom he has too often exercised it.

Mrs Gilling goes on well, but her husband, poor man makes but little progress; perhaps his deficiency just gives her sufficient alarm to heighten her own watchfulness.

Even Nancy Keene, at Sandford, is doing something by her little readings in the week; and those who have opportunity, and can wade through the dirt, seem to enjoy it.

Another letter from Shipham seems to confirm the former accounts. Upon the whole, our letters during the winter were very satisfactory, and till early in June. Then we made our appearance, beginning the regular annual course with Shipham. At this place we found the girls, as usual, in much the greatest state of advancement. The young ones were prettily improved in their reading, questions, &c., but nothing striking, only the appearance of a regular progression of good teaching. The boys were much in the state we expected, but little advanced in anything. However, it

is some comfort these can all say their Catechism and Question-books, and many read the Bible. This was equal to our expectations, though not to our wishes; but, in order to quiet impatience, we endeavoured to recollect they were *Shipham* and *Rowberrow* boys, and to call to mind in what state we found them. They are now civil, never swear, do not take God's name in vain; most of them can say their Catechism, and many read the Bible, and can give general answers respecting the outline of the Christian religion. This is certainly some progress; the smallest should strengthen faith, not create murmuring. The young women still attend in the week with tolerable regularity, behave well, and some appear to taste and enjoy it.

At Axbridge, we found the usual decency and regularity, particularly among the boys, who were much improved in reading, questions, &c.; but, like the master and mistress, dumb in spiritual things.

Cheddar, as usual, was reserved for the great reward. Here boys and girls, old and young, men and women, all seemed blended together to sing their Maker's praises, and to cry aloud that a Redeemer is at length found in Cheddar. Here the great work evidently goes on—the people hunger and thirst—the church is filled—families pray—children are easily brought to the knowledge of God—and, as a proof of their sincerity, are the means of being permitted to bring their parents. Thus shall this seemingly forgotten people, buried as it were in their own cliffs, at length become an enlightened race, praising and glorifying the Giver

of all things. Our expectations during the winter had been considerable; and we found the children, in general, had made a great progress. The young men and women appeared to have increased in knowledge and grace. O Lord, do Thou enable them still to press forward! Three young men were added to their number who discovered strong signs of repentance. One, in particular, seemed dreadfully struck with the depravity of his own heart. I never heard any creature deplore his fallen nature so affectingly. A deep dejection sat upon his countenance. However, he has since, by Divine assistance, been shewn the redemption of sinners by the death and sufferings of a Saviour, and he is more cheerful and composed. The General Fast-day, Mrs Baber told us, had been more blessed than any single day she had ever known. The preceding Sunday she had explained to them the nature of it, and had prepared herself accordingly. She had a great congregation, and great success, and had never known so prosperous a day in Cheddar. It was a fine sermon which so deeply struck so many hearts, and God enabled her, afterwards, to keep up the good work begun.

On the Sunday following, early in the morning, we were at Congresbury. Sickness and death had considerably diminished the size of the school for the present; and the two stones whom we left as teachers we found increased in hardness. However, some sprightly children had learned a good deal by heart, and seemed in a thriving way as to book knowledge.

Yatton came next in course: the school full, and

every thing going on *pretty* well. We have always felt that capital teachers would do a great deal here. However, here is, upon the whole, much to give satisfaction, as well as very much to lament.

We now appeared at Nailsea, and found a good school, and considerable improvement among the boys ; but much cause of dissatisfaction with respect to the girls. Mrs Younge does not yet seem to enter into our mode of teaching so well as we could wish ; but we trust in time she will. *He* is active and clever. We have promised ourselves much comfort from this place ; it comes slowly, but I believe it *will* come. We are apt to choose to have things in *our* time ; but the Almighty, knowing better, will have them in *His*, and we must wait.

The Sunday following ended our first examination at Sandford and Banwell. We were pleased with both ; Nancy Keene doing as well as she could with her children ; the number as usual, and the improvements pretty good. At Banwell, three boys said, each, forty-six chapters by heart, and, in general, they had brought them forward as much as possible. They are a pair possessing the highest integrity and purest piety.

Thus ended our first tour of '93. Much to rejoice over, much to lament, and a wide door open for hard labour. May God give strength, or rather may He give the willing mind !

We began now to get ready for the Shipham Club, to the no small joy of the women, who were busy in preparing finery. We met a large body at three o'clock,

and formed a most creditable procession to church, when Mr Jones preached a useful, proper sermon. The bells were ringing on our arrival, and a rustic band of music preceded us all round the hill, to the great amusement of the numerous spectators. Further opportunities offered of discovering the human heart (of course the depravity of it), in contending with them as to the fixing the stated sums for their relief in sickness ; but, upon the whole, they agreeably surprised us, and, to their credit, everything passed off decently and in order. Two modest-looking brides came forward, and received the marriage portion, promised in the articles, of five shillings, a pair of worsted stockings of our own knitting, and a Bible. This was a very merry part of the feast ; every one busy in advising the brides how to dispose of the wedding portion ; every one dissuading them from eating it, but counselling them to buy a tea-spoon or some bit of plate. We have always accustomed ourselves to give some little sort of exhortation at the conclusion of all our meetings ; something independent of the sermon or the clergyman. Some one has wittily called it a *charge*. Our day, as usual, concluded with one of these. The vices or faults particularly alluded to this year were, neglect of sending the children sufficiently early, going to shops on Sundays, and not always telling the truth. The commendations given were on the ground of the children being kept cleaner, and made more civil.

[This interesting commemoration is described also by the lively pen of Mrs Hannah, in a letter addressed

to Mrs Kennicot, and, as the letter has been hitherto unpublished, the reader will not be displeased to be presented with a little more of it than relates directly to the club feast. The letter is dated July 18, 1793:—
. “Yesterday, Mr Wilberforce and young Mr Venn (Rev. John Venn), the new rector of Clapham, left us, after having spent several quiet and peaceful, though not very cool, days in this little hermitage. The former is running his race of ‘glory, and honour, and immortality,’ I really think with additional speed.* As to the latter, it is a great compliment to almost any man to say he is agreeable when Wilberforce is in company, because the gaiety of his temper and the vivacity of his understanding make him appear to more advantage than good men always do; but Mr Venn is not only extremely pious, but modest, learned, and entertaining. I carried him to preach at two of our largest churches, and found him a solid, awakening, and judicious preacher.

“On Wednesday, we had one of our annual club feasts. Good Mr Jones gave us a very appropriate and useful sermon. Figure to yourself Patty and me in the august character of presidents, (painful pre-eminence!) marching up the highest hill in the country, in one of these African days, at the head of our grand procession, the music of half-a-dozen villages parading before us with ‘God save the King;’ and then making tea for

* * It may be interesting to observe that Mr W. “laid the first timbers,” as he words it, of his “Practical Christianity,” about a fortnight afterwards.

these hungry hundreds, who, we diverted ourselves with calculating, drank twelve hundred dishes. It was pleasant, however, to see them all very tidily dressed in their smart linen gowns, and good black hats; and this is one collateral advantage of the Institution, that, whereas there used to be hardly anybody at church, and the reason assigned was that they had nothing fit to be seen in, now the vanity of having decent clothing to *meet the ladies* at the annual festivity makes them industrious and frugal, to buy a gown out of their little earnings; and the churches are now filled with clean and creditable-looking poor women.

After tea, two brides came forward to claim the promised prize for any young women who, having attended the instruction at the schools, should marry with a fair reputation—an event rare indeed in these villages. I presented these marriage prizes with as much ceremony, and they received them with as much joy, as if they had been marriage settlements on twenty sheets of parchment; whereas this mighty boon consisted only of five shillings, a new Bible, and a pair of white stockings of our own knitting—but that, indeed, is a good part of the honour.”]

It is a long time since the poor Draycot girl has been mentioned; she goes on very decently, and is very regular, though not in the state she was at first; but even this is matter of great thankfulness, because she lives in a family of profligate lives, and subject to their reproaches, not to say abuse.

Another visit to Nailsea gave us still dissatisfaction,

with the girls particularly. We had a general routing and scolding—sometimes necessary, and often useful.

Congresbury, ever unpromising, was now completely so. What little appearance of sense we found in the Turners is now done away by old age ; and the fine boys we brought forward last year are gone to service ; so that our visits there are dull and discouraging. Some girls have learned a great deal by heart, and discover good talents. Should God, in His providence, provide teachers for us, we might yet do something. I imagine He will, and that the something will be done. However, there is one never-failing source of comfort, that all these children everywhere, whatever may be the deficiency of the teachers, are learning to read the Bible.

Another visit to Nailsea has given us animation ; and Nailsea, as at first predicted, shall be our second Cheddar. The Younges seem alive ; and we hope experience will work them into a good method of teaching. The children, in general, do not want capacity ; and in time, we trust, they will not want grace. We returned this day full of hope. Mr Hart, too, much improved—indeed an evangelical sermon.

The day of gala for the Cheddar club now approached, and we made preparations accordingly. Many friends attended, and joined our long procession to church. But our highest honour was to come : the vicar arrived the evening before, was waiting for us, joined Mr Boake, and paraded in the fore-front, and was really so good-natured as to read prayers. Mr Boake preached a very

suitable and excellent sermon ; and Mr Rawbone returned with us to tea, behaving with the utmost good-humour, and apparent delight and satisfaction, through the whole. He made his wife a member of the club, by a handsome subscription of a guinea.

Our *charge* now became an awkward thing, as it was not very pleasant—and I am sure it was not very polite (but I am certain it was very true)—to stand up and roar aloud, before vicar and curate, that the church was empty till we came to Cheddar. However, these little lectures are filled with truths, and this could not possibly be omitted, being connected with other parts of it. The faults complained of this year—the shops on Sundays, and a disposition to a little self-righteousness in some new converts, not mentioning names. The commendations considerable—regularity in sending the children, constant attendance themselves, no improper conduct in the cliffs, and many other important changes.

One bride only demanded the marriage-portion, a modest, sweet young woman ; and she received the same good advice from her club sisters how to spend this great sum ; but none seemed anxious to tell when, or how often, she was to read her new Bible.

Another bride was there ; but, alas ! neither vicar nor curate could with truth sign her certificate.

Our day went off decently, comfortably, and satisfactorily, the women evidently improved in every sense.

Two or three Sundays followed in the usual strain ;

but the last deserves an observation : it was the first upon which we had ever been both confined with sickness on the same day. ✓

The *Feast*, as the children term it, now approached ; the schools, I hope, laudably anxious who should repeat most chapters, and sing most psalms and hymns.

The day arrived ; it was wet—the beef and pudding all prepared. We were obliged to call up all our fortitude, being anxious lest our food should be spoiled, and planned much good advice, for the Sunday following, upon patience.

However, the next morning the rain subsided, the sun shone, and the day was beautiful. We met, on a high, fine part of Mendip, our nine schools, composed of near one thousand children. The clergy of the several parishes attended, and led the procession. A band of rustic music—a tribute of gratitude from all the neighbouring villages—stepped forward and preceded the whole, playing “God save the King.” We followed the clergy, then Ma’am Baber, and her two hundred Cheddarites, and so on — the procession ending with Nailsea, the girls having fine nosegays, the boys carrying white rods in their hands : the gentlemen and ladies weeping, as though we had exhibited a deep tragedy ; but the pleasing idea of the hungry going to be fed, I believe, caused these tears—rather those of joy than sorrow. At the entrance of our circle, the music withdrew, and the children then struck up their psalms and hymns. All were then seated in circles, fifteen completing the whole. The

effect was really very interesting. When all were served they arose, and each pastor, stepping into the inside, prayed for a blessing on his own flock ; and this part of the ceremony they did well—long and solemn. Examination, singing, &c., took place. At length, every voice on the hill was permitted, and indeed invited, to join in one general chorus of "God save the King." This is the only pleasure, in the form of a song, we ever allow. Instantaneously, the children, the masters and mistresses, keeping their eyes on the clergy and ourselves, fell into the procession as at the beginning, walked to the place where we first met ; and every school marched off to their several districts, singing hallelujahs, till they sunk into the valley, and their voices could be no more heard. At this moment every heart seemed softened and subdued, and many eyes shed tears. Seven or eight thousand people attended, and behaved as quietly as the sheep that grazed around us.

Thus did this day open to us much matter for reflection. Farmers and their wives mixed with their own poor, and rode in the same conveyance—their own waggons. The clergy headed this ragged procession, with their hats in their hands. Seven thousand people shewed us they could be *quiet* on a day of merriment, not to say *innocent*. Upwards of nine hundred children were well fed, as a reward for a year's labour ; that labour was learning the Bible.

The meeting took its rise from religious institutions. The day passed in the exercise of duties, and closed

with praise. Nothing of a gay nature was introduced, but loyalty to the king ; and this never interfered with higher duties to the King of kings.

[The Rev. John Newton, in a letter hitherto unpublished, addressed to Mrs H. More, thus alludes, in his own characteristic way, to this Mendip celebration :—

“Till I know the exact standard height at which a hill may aspire to be a mountain, I shall not only call Mendip a mountain, but consider it as the chief mountain in the world (Mount Sion excepted). Neither the Alps nor the Andes, neither Ida nor Olympus, nor even Parnassus, can compare with it. Homer never dreamed of such a scene as was exhibited on the top of Mendip the 16th of August last, the account of which in the newspapers gladdened my heart. Had I known of it in time, I should have been there in spirit (and perhaps I was, for I am there often) ; but my mind has since surveyed the consecrated spot. May the Lord still prosper your great concern ! May He bless you and your children more and more ! Who can say how many of these poor children shall come forth to welcome you into your everlasting habitation, at the hour when your labours and trials shall terminate !

“How are you and your family honoured in being instrumental to save such a number from wretchedness and profligacy here, and many, I trust, from the power of sin and Satan ! He who put it into your hearts will strengthen your hands, and give you growing success. But a single instance of this kind is of more

importance than the temporal concerns of a whole kingdom."

In another letter of this year, also hitherto unpublished, he observes—

"I am too much interested in the neighbourhood of Mendip not to rejoice and be thankful that the Lord's work there prospers. Every part of a large farm is seldom equally productive. But in the Lord's husbandry all depends upon His will. If He speak the word, the most unpromising and barren spots will suddenly blossom like the rose. And His crop is so valuable, that, if but one soul in a whole parish is saved, it will repay all the expense, labour, and opposition it has cost. Go on, ladies! God is with you. I trust you will see greater things than these; and perhaps some of the places which least answer your expectation at present, may hereafter afford you most satisfaction. I am often with you, though you cannot see me."

The exhortatory portion of this interesting extract may remind the reader of the poor rabbit-catcher's words at the commencement of the journal, and when the work was but in prospect—"You will have much difficulty, but let not the enemy tempt you to go back; and God bless the work!"]

Soon after this, we once more encountered the glass-houses, and visited as before the nineteen wretched little habitations, containing two hundred human creatures, each an accountable being at the day of judgment. Civilly and kindly received as usual, many lame apologies for not sending their children more constantly, and

many promises to be more regular in future. We collected sixteen new recruits, not to fight against Germany or France, but with a desire to direct them to make war against the flesh and the devil, and to fight for the Lord Jesus Christ. This undertaking is everything but desperate; still that *but* includes a great deal, and implies some measure of hope.

From the cottages, which exhibited the usual scene of filth, feasting, and gross ignorance, we proceeded to enter the very glass-houses, amidst black Cyclopean figures, and flaming, horrible fires. However, we were again agreeably surprised as well as affected, for every one of these dismal-looking beings laid down their tools, and immediately surrounded us, speaking in the civillest terms, calling all the great boys out of their black holes, and using really persuasive language to them to induce them to listen to us, and do what we wished. We laid a plan to get them one evening in a week to the school, for the benefit of hearing the Bible read and expounded. Eighteen promised faithfully to obey us. We distributed books, which seemed to give great delight.

On the following Sunday all the girls came; the boys failed, except two, giving for a reason that they were ashamed. However, in time we expect to overcome this difficulty. It will be an important achievement to bring these dark creatures into light, and to have them attend as regularly as the great boys at Cheddar. May the recollection of what that was make us fearless, and give us righteous boldness to go on hoping! Nailsea

is hard work, great labour, but greater patience seems necessary.

Yatton and Congresbury now demanded our attention. Had we *all* suitable teachers at the former, we have often thought great things would be achieved. Congresbury creeping slowly, as usual.

We think we may now venture to draw comfort at Shipham. Some of the women who attend the reading begin to shew their change of heart by change of life. The young women have been less constant during the summer, drawn aside by the temptation of improper company. However, a little remonstrance seems to make them ashamed—a good sign; and we hope to allure them back again ere it be too late.

A visit paid at this time to Cheddar was attended with an interesting event. Robert Reeves (one who, of all others, has shewn the most satisfactory proofs of true conversion), and who first brought Farmer Ford, his master, to the evening reading, had now left his service for want of work, and fixed with a farmer at Draycot. It seems as though poor Robert carried about an unusual portion of the good Spirit with him. He has already been the instrument of bringing his new master and mistress to the school. They are contented to bring a piece of bread and cheese in their pockets (though a joint of meat is dressed for the family at home), in order not to lose time. A young man, their son, a pleasing youth, likewise attends. They have family prayer already, and have courted some of their neighbours to come and join them. We have given

them a "Doddridge," which the father has promised to read every evening before prayers. Wherever Robert is (a poor plough-boy), good instantly arises, converts are made, and the very spirit of prayer seems to go forth.

We have really received pleasure twice at Congressbury. We are frequently asked for our rules. Here is an answer: We are now in the third year at this place, and are still in the fifth chapter of Genesis. This is some proof that *perseverance*, and not *despair*, makes the best rules. These poor, wretched children can at last give a tolerable account of the *fall* and the *redemption*. Their *understandings* seem to comprehend it; oh, may it in time reach their hearts! We must not forget to observe they have gone on in reading and spelling pretty well.

We now gave up a whole Sunday to Nailsea, to afford our master the opportunity of spending it at Cheddar with *Bishop* Baber, being anxious to have all her plans adopted at Nailsea, where we must still entertain strong hope.

About this time we had a sad and curious bustle at Shipham. An infamous woman there, of depraved character, set up a ball, and drew aside too many of our young women. We flew immediately after this lady, and a dialogue too shocking to relate ensued. It did, indeed, shew the depravity of the human heart when left to itself. We have consulted a Justice of the Peace, who has promised to assist us in setting aside the dancing.

An affecting circumstance took place about this time. Last year, when the common people shewed their excess of loyalty by burning the effigy of Tom Paine, poor Robert Reeves, and two or three more of our more hopeful people, intending to shew their zeal and attachment to their king and country, were tempted to join the people of Axbridge in this bonfire. The sad consequence which too usually attends such a public testimony of loyalty ensued—they were overtaken with liquor, and intoxication followed. Remorse and shame instantly took place. The following Sunday some could not appear at the school, and those who did hung their heads. The greatest apparent repentance succeeded—much praying and reading. In a few weeks all but Robert became a little reconciled to themselves; *his* sorrow was deeper, and of long continuance. It preyed dreadfully upon his mind for many months, and despair seemed at length to take possession of him. H. had some conversations with him, and read some suitable passages from “The Rise and Progress.” At length, the Almighty was pleased to shine into his heart, and give him comfort, and he now, like Philip’s eunuch, goes on his way rejoicing. As this backsliding is so happily healed, it may probably keep off the most dangerous of all attacks—a temptation to *self-righteousness*—and add increasing vigour to his watchfulness.

A result of uncommon generosity has just amused and surprised us. What all our labour of love and teaching could not effect, one *feast* has completely brought to pass. The rich, frigid farmers of Banwell,

once so hostile to us, could not endure the disgrace of their ragged parish at the dinner. They have therefore united, made a purse, given the boys all a handsome blue coat, and the girls a shawl.

After hopes and fears have been alternately excited—after much agitation, some scolding, and a great deal of coaxing—we have at length a noble Sunday evening audience at Nailsea. Our last visit was chiefly pleasure (always excepting a good deal of work). One hundred grown people attend. Two or three backsliders are returned, sorrowing for sin, and mourning over their *second fall*. The school promises to increase, and everything has seemed to smile, and this has made a day in October wear the aspect of a day in June. The natural sun looked the brighter for the spiritual shining of the Sun of righteousness.

November.—A visit to Cheddar now surpassed, without exaggeration, everything we had hitherto met with. Mrs Baber appeared to be all transport, and we had never seen her in so happy a state before. The school was full; and Mr Boake preached the gospel boldly and faithfully, to the great delight of the enlightened, and to the amazement of the ignorant. He had the humility to stay during the reading the preceding Sunday, and desired Mrs Baber to go through the whole ceremony, not considering him as being present; and this, accordingly, she did. This is an important and striking revolution!

We found the school crowded indeed, though the day was short and wet, and all appeared full of know-

ledge and zeal. We stayed and read to the evening congregation, crowded also. It was truly comfortable and consoling—the people cheerful upon the best principles, pious, humble, grateful. Mr Hyde—the once lofty, insolent, proud Mr Hyde—accosted us with all the humility of a Christian of the lowest rank. He is now well informed upon the great subject. This one man is full payment for all the toil of Cheddar.

We have again been a little fretted and teased at Yatton ; but having at last settled a little plan with our religious farmer for the winter, we hope things will go on better than expectation.

The 24th of November 1793 should be marked as one of the most important we have ever known. A great work seems now begun indeed ; and “Grow in grace” shall be the motto at Nailsea, as well as Cheddar. Three young men (one profligate to excess) and three old ones appeared, bowed down as it were by the weight of their sins, groaning with the heavy burden, and crying aloud to the Physician of souls. A more interesting scene we had seldom, if ever, witnessed. One of the old men had a good understanding, and expressed himself well upon his state of mind,—the other, poor in words, but high in desire. One of the young men seemed a quiet mourner—deeply struck with a sense of his misconduct, without well knowing where to fly. Oh, may the school be his directing post ! The third appeared more affected by the state of his companions, than by any thing he had discovered in himself ; but a quiet youth, and very promising. The hundred

hearers still constantly attend the evening reading; all decent, and many besides these shew some signs of repentance. Nailsea, from the first, was marked with striking features—a mixture of miseries, and of alternate hopes and fears.

We had now to take our farewell of Cheddar for this year. We had found everything so flourishing very lately that little more has to be said, except that there was a continuation of the same prosperous proceedings. As usual, we collected all the forward ones, to read and be examined in a chapter, and surprising indeed was their degree of knowledge, and the appearance of vital Christianity. Little Robert Hill's great convert, a brother-apprentice, was there. He gave strong and evident proofs of an extraordinary change, entirely brought about, under grace, by sleeping and learning the same trade with poor Robert. This boy, Obadiah Marshal, has a good intellect, and knows the Scriptures already surprisingly. Poor Mrs Gilling came with much emotion, saying she firmly believed her husband and Mr Richard Gilling were coming that evening to the reading. Should we, at last, win over these two men, the importance of it transcends all words. Mr Hyde, whose case so rejoiced us at the opening of the year, could only more surprise us. Our parting prayer was offered up amidst a sobbing audience, and we took our leave amidst circumstances too affecting to describe. If prayers and blessings were ever offered in sincerity, we departed loaded with both.

Bath.—The first letter we received after our arrival

at this place confirmed the growing prosperity of everything we left at Nailsea. The poor colliers are daily being strengthened in their good intentions, and become hourly more serious, and deeply affected with their situation. The room overflows at the evening reading. We can now boast (but oh let it be with fear and trembling, but still with rejoicing !) that we have a righteous coal-pit. Should the following year spread the good seed sown, and should it reach the glass-houses, the blessing will then *indeed* be diffused ! The present prosperity calls aloud for thankfulness, and the looking to such a hopeful futurity will, or should, excite a spirit of prayer. We now come to sum up the little history of the past year. An old man, in one of the poor-houses, was certainly brought to a deep sense of religion by the reading of the chapter and prayers, morning and evening. Most interesting indeed was his account of himself, of his former and present state ; crying aloud that the prayers had struck conviction into his heart, and had been the saving of his soul. In short, a more humble and sincere Christian one has seldom seen. One scarcely knows how to commit the following sentence to paper, nor perhaps is it quite right to omit it ; but to hear this old man, gray-headed, exclaim, "Oh, ladies, your coming into this country has been the means of saving my soul !" Poor Thomas Earl ! if we have been the honoured instruments in the Almighty's hands—if He has caused these prayers of ours to work this conversion, may our own means of grace strike with tenfold force upon our own hearts ;

and while we are permitted to assist others, may we not ourselves be castaways!

As for the schools, Cheddar and Nailsea speak for themselves. Many, no doubt, are already turned from a life of sin to a life of holiness, and will praise the Lord to all eternity.

At Axbridge there is certainly a material improvement. It has arisen too much from our own labours; but our slow teachers are a little improved, sufficiently so as to keep up our instructions during our absence.

At Shipham, the land of labour and vexation, but still of hope, we have the certainty of much improvement in the knowledge of the Scriptures, and great acquirements in reading, &c. We endeavour to wait with patience for Divine grace to operate upon the heart, and then Shipham shall shine bright as Cheddar.

The smaller schools of Sandford and Banwell, considering their all but insuperable obstacles, are certainly improving, the teachers of both being excellent. We will trust that many may be training for future holiness.

Yatton gives us some comfort, and Congresbury can *read* the Bible.

Thus are nearly a thousand children in *training*, at all events, for the mansions of the blessed; and thus in *ten* villages will the Saviour's name be *known at last*.

So ends '93. May praying hearts draw down future blessings on our schemes! May omissions and carelessness decrease, and the will be warmed and invigorated to future zeal! May our helps and advan-

tages animate the time to come! May we work while it is day! May our talents and opportunities be directed by humility! May we never rest satisfied to think that any of our labours are well done!—and may we be careful that no soul is lost through our lack of diligence, or want of perseverance! May we consider ourselves not only the Lord's *working*, but His *waiting* servants, that nothing may ever discourage us! May the Divine blessing descend on all who assist us in this work, and may the God of peace sanctify us all! Amen.

[Before proceeding to the next year's chronicle of this devoted Christian woman, I will insert an extract from a MS. letter of her sister Mrs Hannah, addressed to Mrs Kennicott, and dated 18th November 1793, from which the reader will form, if it be possible, a still higher estimate of the labours just recorded :—

“ COWSLIP GREEN.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,—I thank you for your kind letter, which I should have answered immediately as you desired, but for the very reason which induced you to inquire after me—I mean almost continual indisposition. I thank God I have not been laid by for long together with any very severe illness. But I am hardly ever without a cough for a week together, and the days I have headaches are rather more than the days I have them not. I ought, however, to be thankful that I can still keep the field two or three days in a week, though the great distance at which my troops

lie, being twenty miles in diameter, makes it rather fatiguing these short days, and the least wet or damp lays me up. However, the winter is so fast approaching, when I cannot work at all, that I am willing to prolong the campaign as much as possible before I get into winter-quarters at Bath, which I consider less as a scene of repose than a place of banishment, so little congenial is it to my taste and feelings."

CONTINUATION OF THE SCHOOL JOURNAL,

BEGINNING THE YEAR 1794.

THE closing and the opening of a year seem to strike an awful feeling upon the mind. The closing—it is gone by, and cannot be recalled ; the opening—it is to come ; be vigilant !

Good accounts from Nailsea ended the last year, and equally good intelligence from Cheddar gives joy to the heart on entering upon '94.

The information from Shipham we received with particular fear, from the state of anarchy which it was in when we quitted it, on account of this new dancing scene, together with some unpleasant innovations. However, the dancing was gradually diminishing, and our young women hitherto stood firm. Poor simple excellent John Spenser sent his annual account of Banwell ; it was very prosperous.

About March, a dismal letter from the Younges, announcing the sad news that the small-pox was spreading at Nailsea. Our common sense, as well as our experience on former occasions, convinced us here would be a long pause in the active operations of the school ; for though the farmers sent us word they

would inoculate as fast as possible, yet a village so scattered takes a long time to get cured.

Our accounts in general gave us pleasure till the beginning of May, and we then made the usual regular round of the first schools, beginning with Shipham, which we found in a good state as to size, and indeed pretty satisfactory with respect to improvement. The girls have a great deal of book knowledge, read well, and understand the Scriptures. This is *our* part; may the Almighty by His grace so fix it upon the heart that poor wretched Shipham Hill may acknowledge and feel the power of a Redeemer! The boys are still surprisingly stupid, seemingly impenetrable as to their understandings. A constant set of dull boys is very discouraging, but still they have immortal souls. Too much smoothness might likewise tempt the teachers into slothfulness. I believe Satan is often as busy in a calm as in a storm; it is the bright day brings the adder forth. The sunshine of summer, with sweethearts, apples, and nuts, are as dangerous to the preservation of Shipham virtue as all the pleasures of Ranelagh can be to the fine gentlemen and ladies of London. These temptations oblige us to double our vigilance and to add rewards. They have conducted themselves with considerable diligence during the past winter, attended their little readings very regularly, and expressed a high sense of gratitude for our care and kindness to them; and the occasional little treats of tea and cake seem to affect them. These sort of simple pleasures have their use in civilising them; they can-

not corrupt, and they certainly amuse and give pleasure. The rich and learned sometimes exceed the pleasures of a dish of tea.

At Axbridge we found the usual annual trial of middling teathers, but rather more than the usual pleasure in the fact of the children being considerably improved, particularly the girls, who have learned a great deal by heart. That there are those who have an *understanding* of it, we owe to the zeal and diligence of Mr Boake. The six oldest boys are gone to service, which makes the master look very cross, though I endeavoured to convince him that these boys must eat, and that that was a sufficient reason, upon religious principles, to be alive and active in bringing forward the next set, that they might not be sent into the world in a state of darkness and ignorance.

Though we had many complaints to make, yet, on the whole, we have cause to rejoice over the school even in its present state.

Cheddar still flourishes as usual—the school full; the evening readings as crowded as formerly. The young men and women, or, as they still call themselves, the girls and boys, are, as far as we can judge, solidly pious; their daily lives happily keeping pace with their Christian profession. There is a little girl added to the number of young Christians,—her name Sally Thatcher, of profligate parents, often beat and punished by them for her attachment to the school, and she comes with a sort of divine patience and humility, that is quite heavenly. Her account this day of her

father and mother is very striking ; they are beginning to be softened in their behaviour to her, and talk of coming some evening to hear the sermon. The mutual rejoicings this day on all sides were interesting and sincere. These are the pleasures that so over-reward a great deal of labour performed in a great deal of pain, independent of the high hope of all, the salvation of souls.

We read a sermon to a full audience in the evening, and all rejoiced we were once more met again. Mrs Gilling continues a solid, experienced Christian, striving in her daily life to walk with God. Her husband certainly is getting a little on. The great convert of last year, Mr Hyde, was there, and appeared to understand and enjoy the whole business of the evening. Mrs Baber has sometimes been a little uneasy about him ; I trust, and think, she has been deceived.

Little Sandford is going on as well as it can in so unfortunate and watery a situation ; well taught, but few in number—not fifty.

Happy John and Nelly Spenser ! for Banwell school is full and flourishing. They have had a feast too from a stony gentleman farmer, and everything is now taking place which we never expected to see, and that which was clouded by so much discouragement is now brightened up by sunshine and cheerfulness—so much for waiting !

And now for Congresbury. The account of the past year will generally do for the present. An insupportable master and mistress, with some fine children who

would make a figure at Cheddar ; not a syllable we tell them ever forgotten. They certainly learn to read, and a little by heart. The school considerably diminished by the spreading of the small-pox, and six or seven great boys gone to service. However, the two latter calamities time may retrieve.

Pretty near the same account to give of Yatton as last year. It is going on extremely well, but might be much better. The same complaints and long faces from the teachers here too—that the oldest boys and girls are gone to service. Surprising that nobody considers these children must be fed, and that good service is a blessed provision for a hungry stomach, and shoeless feet ; but the trouble of bringing forward a new set is the occasion of complaint. This constant removal is *our* greatest trial likewise, but surely it is the important part of the work, and we nowhere see where life stands still.

At Nailsea we found the school filling very fast, in consequence of the disappearance of the small-pox, which lasted little more than six weeks, and the interruption to the school much shorter than we expected.

Upon the whole, at the end of our first tour, after examining the children, and making every inquiry of the masters and mistresses respecting them, we have every reason to be thankful that our schools are in as flourishing a state as we could reasonably expect, and that some good seed is sowing ; oh that the Almighty may cause it to bring forth fruit ! Of this we cannot

be mistaken—nearly a thousand children are learning to read the Bible.

After distributing the annual rewards, which takes up some weeks, and bestowing many threatenings and many exhortations with each present, the anniversary of the Shipham Club approached, and we made preparations accordingly. Many friends accompanied us, which added to our appearance, but still more to the strength of our box. Mr Tandy was so good as to come and preach a sermon; those who did not profit by it have to regret a lost opportunity. The good health of the women has rendered the purse rich, and we were happy in the opportunity of considerably increasing the allowance. Three and sixpence a-week is a great deal to a poor woman who is sick and has nothing; and seven and sixpence for a lying-in is a vast possession. They expressed themselves much obliged, but when a guinea was promised for a funeral, the gratitude broke out in raptures. This, they exclaimed, was a blessing indeed! It seems to require an unusual stock of patience to endure such mistaken folly and ignorance. The promise of additional relief in their sickness gave but faint pleasure compared with the prospect of a handsome funeral!

The *charge* this year contained still heavy complaints against going to shops on Sundays, and sending the children late; and highly reprov'd and condemn'd the dancing of the winter, praising the young women who had escaped the snare, and adding pretty strong exhortations to future good conduct.

[My readers, I conceive, will not be loath to read this *charge* in its full length; and I am happy, having the MS. at hand, in being able to produce it. It is as follows:—

“Notwithstanding the religious instruction you always receive from the pulpit on these anniversaries, by your diligent, faithful, and zealous minister, and the very peculiar advantages you have been favoured with this day (an advantage which I hope will remain upon your hearts, and make a lasting impression), yet it has always been our custom, as you well know, to address something to you, by way of admonition or exhortation, being more particularly acquainted with many local circumstances respecting the institutions, and the morals of the young people. I am not going to upbraid *you*, or to magnify *ourselves*. God knows we are but unworthy instruments, though zealous to do you service. It is impossible that any other motive but your good should collect us together, and the great wish we constantly bring with us every year is, that your daily life may keep pace with our daily prayers and good wishes. You will recollect the school to have been our first object, and that nearest our hearts. We have now been amongst you four years; four years your children have been training up in the knowledge of the Scriptures; four years they have equally been receiving temporal and spiritual assistance. Here are now upwards of one hundred and fifty children who can give an account of the God who made them, of the Saviour who redeemed them, and of the Holy Spirit

who, I trust, will sanctify them. I ask, Where are the half-naked, poor, forlorn, wretched, ignorant creatures we used to find lying about on a Sunday upon this hill, swearing, gaming, reprobates, vagabonds, flying as it were in the face of the Almighty, a disgrace to their parents, a scandal to their country, a dishonour to their God, a prey to the devil—where are they now to be found? At school, at prayer, at church—serving the Lord, keeping His commandments, decently clothed, creditable. My dear women, I pause a minute, that your souls may send a short prayer of gratitude to the throne of grace for the change. It is grievous to us to add that there are some great boys still much given to sin and Satan, sowing corruption wherever they are, ridiculing all the good children whenever they go to school and church, and spreading much mischief. If any of their mothers are here, we pity them with all our hearts, and advise them to reason, and talk, and persuade them to forsake these sins of the devil, and, now there is a way made for them, and a road open, to direct them to turn to the Lord while He will hear them. Above all, do you take care what example you set them; and remember, if you possess religion, you must shew it by your daily life, and you must assist in encouraging them to stand firm, and not turn from their learning and opportunities because a few lazy, wicked boys ridicule them. And which do you think is most easy to endure—a little ridicule now, or everlasting condemnation hereafter? Remember what the Almighty Himself says—‘I will

mock when your fear cometh ;' and there is another text that says, 'He that is ashamed of me, of him also will the Son of man be ashamed when he cometh to judge the world.' We desire you will be very active in this business, and let as little interruption as possible be made to the improvement of the children, that they may go on peaceably in their daily duties. I ask any of the mothers present what are their feelings when they behold this great collection of once dirty, ignorant beings, going creditably dressed, in the greatest order, sober, modest, with their Prayer-books in their hands, to the house of God, with minds instructed to understand what they shall hear? May you nevermore behold this sight without sending up your fervent praises to the Dispenser of all good for this amazing change. Indeed, this ought to encourage some of you to be more regular in sending them at an earlier hour. Have you no concern, I may say shame, that we are here from such a distance in all weathers, and often find too many absent at nine o'clock? If we could but convince you of the difference there is in the learning of those who are regular and those who are not, I think shame would make you mend your ways, if nothing else would. It seems hard sometimes to be doing you good in spite of yourselves. But these are marvellous times, and let us rejoice that your children will mend *you*, if you cannot mend your children ; and if, in the order of Providence, they learned to read the Bible first, why, be thankful 'tis got into the family at any rate. Nothing belongs to God but what belongs to the Bible. It is called the

Book of Life. It was written by God's Spirit, and you will all be tried by the truth of its contents; and, oh, let all present rejoice it is to be found in many houses here, and may God's grace stamp the truth of it on many hearts! The first great duty of a Christian is *humility*; therefore cast away your pride, and be content and thankful to learn of your children. There are many young ones who can teach, if the old will but learn. Pray, take care that in the midst of these abundant opportunities you are not taken away in your sins, for there is no repentance in the grave. I hope none of you now (though you lead laborious lives) complain you have not time for prayer. The publican could say, 'God be merciful to me a sinner!' The instances are rare where you have not a few minutes to beg God's blessing. 'Tis presumption to enter on the matters of the world without asking it; and a prayer put up to God at hogling or hay-making will be as acceptable to Him as when offered from the bed-side or the closet. It is equally presumptuous to lay yourselves down to rest after a prosperous day's work without thanking Him for the mercies of it. A praying heart, under the sweat of the brow, will not be forgotten by Him who knows the secrets of all hearts. But above all, once more I beseech you, be content to learn of your children. Not only permit them to read and explain the Bible to you, but those who have pious children suffer them to set up family prayer, as they have done in many, many houses in Cheddar, and who knows but the unbelieving parent may be saved by the

believing child here as well as there? May God grant that, from this moment, your prayers may be no more forgotten than your meals! As the one feeds the body, so will the other nourish the soul.

“We have laboured hard with your grown-up daughters, and this is the part of our labour that gives us rejoicing. Let us go back to last November; it was a melancholy month. Think, after all, when we came here, to find dancing encouraged by too many people at the house of a woman—you all know who; I am ashamed to describe her character. Dancing at Shipham must always be improper, but in the midst of religious institutions, societies, and schools it is particularly indecent and abominable. And what were the consequences? Inquire of the neighbouring Justices; *they* can give the best account of Shipham dancing. Dreadful, indeed, was the intelligence, such as modesty forbids me to repeat. Let every young woman who hears me tremble, and avoid the like miserable fate! ‘But, what!’ will a stranger ask, ‘were *all* the young women led astray?’ Oh no, the instances were few, but fatal; may they be a warning to the rest! With pleasure, I repeat, many took our friendly caution, and abstained from these shocking scenes of vice; nor will the event be less favourable as to their welfare in this world than productive of certain happiness in the world to come. Ill does it become those who attend the religious instructions of this house to defeat our labours, and their own improvement, by frequenting either the *licentious* dancing-matches of this village, or the lewd

plays in a neighbouring town. But I avoid dwelling on so afflicting a scene, praying sincerely that an end is put to practices not warranted by the laws of the land, and which will ever give offence to Almighty God. Can religion, do you think, go on while such are the proceedings? But near twenty young women saved from the destructions of the winter is a subject for thankfulness. It was asked how they could spend their time here for a long evening, when they might be out a-pleasuring, as it is called—that is, the pleasure of losing their characters, and offending God. I'll tell you how they were employed in this house, with the sober, worthy, modest, pious mistresses of it—studying the Scriptures. I only appeal to their own hearts if they do not find more peace and content when they go home from an evening spent in religious instruction and prayer, than from one passed in riot and disorder? and I likewise appeal to the gentry here present whether, even supposing heaven were out of the question, such young women are not likely to settle more honourably, and bid more fair for advancing themselves in this world, than those who are without modesty, sobriety, or reputation?

“I now more particularly address myself to the mothers, hoping they are convinced that all this difference is produced by the effects of a little learning and religion, and further remember, that if what we teach at school you contradict by your lives at home, you, not we, shall have that account to render to the Almighty. They are here taught to tell no lies—are you exact at

home in always telling the truth? They are convinced of the sin of taking God's name in vain—do you put a guard upon your own tongues, and let them see you would be as much shocked to break the third commandment as themselves? They are here taught to keep the Sabbath-day holy—do you go to church, and shew them the beauty and pleasure of keeping the fourth commandment likewise? In short, do you take care that, by the sobriety and honesty of your own lives, your children, after having experienced the good instructions of this house, may behold you with such delight that they may be stirred up the more to keep the fifth commandment? Take care that, after having *known* the truth, you do not turn from it. I here warn you in the face of this company, and in the sight of that God who now looks down upon us, that you provoke not your children to *wrong* while they are training up in the way of *right*.

“I now address myself to your consciences whether it is necessary to remind you of what I said last year respecting the breaking of the Sabbath by the abominable custom of going to shops on that day? God grant you may have forsaken such habits! for, whatever you may think of the matter, it is a daring and a dreadful sin. Who will be bold enough to say, and speak the truth, that it is not as easy to procure all the little family articles on a Saturday night as on a Sunday morning? It is a wickedness in every view; you tempt the shop-keeper, the child who fetches the things, and yourself. Thus are three souls endangered because your bit of tea and sugar was not secured the night before, when the

laws of the land allow you to have it, and the mercy of God enables you to earn it ; but, not satisfied with that, you contrive to eat it in sin, and it really seems as though you could not enjoy it till you broke a commandment to get at it. Recollect you have been told this before ; the event is betwixt God and your own hearts—look to it !

“ As for the blessings you have received in sickness by the allowance from the box, you are the best judges. I should imagine the comfort was very considerable. I trust you always receive it in a spirit of gratitude ; and that those who continue to enjoy good health will not forget to be doubly thankful that they are spared the misery of pain, and that they have been the means, though in a small degree, of contributing towards the relief of a suffering neighbour. It is a real satisfaction to us to find we are enabled to advance the allowance ; and, pray, do you advance in gratitude.

“ Oh, be pleased to follow with Thy blessing, good Lord, the business of this day ; and though the Institution is designed for the comfort and relief of the body, yet grant that its benefits may be further sanctified, and may Thy good Spirit ever accompany the temporal assistance received ! May no affliction take place unaccompanied by a conviction of sin ; and may every humble attempt of Thy unworthy instruments be successful in impressing the truths of religion on the minds of both young and old, that so the Redeemer's *name* and *power* may reach every heart, renew every nature, and finally bring every soul to God ! ” \

The day passed off in the greatest harmony, good humour, and innocent festivity. Evident improvement in the women's dress, as well as deportment. It must be seen to be properly felt what a striking effect it has upon these poor creatures' minds and manners to associate occasionally with those who are presumptuously and impertinently called their betters.

The close of this day afforded matter for much gratitude. The hand of God was seen and felt; the change in their outward deportment is great, yet we do not observe much real religion; but if the soil be amended, we may look forward with hope.

Nothing but the usual round of attending the schools took place till the day of the Cheddar anniversary approached.

This was another day of true pleasure. The children all attended, the club full, the box rich, and the more than decency, the uncommon propriety of deportment of such a concourse of people was interesting and remarkable.

The ruling powers of Mrs Baber in the government of this people are of a very extraordinary and surprising nature. There is a righteous boldness in her manner of addressing them striking above measure, and one can scarcely, sometimes, tell whether they love or fear her most. They shew her an undeviating respect and attention that is quite surprising. Mr Boake preached a very admirable practical sermon, and the children sung, to the admiration of the company. This day, as *at Shipham*, ended to our satisfaction, and to the

apparent pleasure of all our friends. The box here allowed the same increase of pay as at Shipham; and the guinea for the funeral excited equal admiration. No brides that could bring certificates at either club.

[The following extracts from a private diary of Hannah More, relating to this period, may not be unacceptable to the reader:—

“*Cowslip Green, Sunday, 8th June, Whitsunday.*—Went to Shipham church and sacrament. Cheddar, afternoon. Mr Jones and Mr Boake preached from same text, ‘I will not leave you comfortless: I will send you another Comforter.’ It was to me a day of great comfort. All flourishing and improving—ninety-three boys and seventy-six girls at Cheddar; one hundred and fifty old folks in the evening. There have been two hundred in winter of the children’s parents to our school sermon Sunday evening.”

“*Sunday, 22d June.*—Sandford school; Banwell church; Axbridge school and church; Shipham evening reading. P. read, to a large attentive company, one of Walker’s sermons. I, very ill all day, and not able to teach. Lord, grant that I may be willing, at Thy bidding, to be a waiting, as well as a working servant!

“B. preached on ‘To be carnally-minded is death; but to be spiritually-minded is life and peace.’ A bold and truly Christian discourse. I congratulated him on the hatred his new doctrines were beginning to draw on him. I pray that he may not be discouraged, but persevere to the end.”

"*Sunday, 29th June.*—Yatton, morning ; Nailsea, afternoon. Heard from Mr Hart and others of much reformation in the parish. Found the children improved. P. read one of Walker's sermons—a large company."

"*1st July.*—The past month offers much subject for praise. Though I was sick a fortnight of it, yet Patty's zeal supplied my lack of service. Saw our concerns flourish. Had the comfort of distributing clothing to all our schools for the first time. It was fatiguing ; but this is not our rest. It is a great honour to be made God's instrument for good either to body or soul."

"*3d July.*—Shipham club. Mr Tandy preached a Christian sermon from 'Let your conversation be such as becometh the gospel of Christ.' Had much comfort in finding this Institution prosper. A good collection : able to increase the allowance. The women well-behaved and grateful ; one hundred attended for their cake. Sung a hymn of praise. Lord, quicken my heart to more gratitude !"

"*Sunday, 13th July.*—Went to Shipham, Axbridge, and Cheddar—very full schools at each. Had much comfort in the improvement of most, and the growing piety of many. We were both enabled to speak and instruct with spirit, and seemed to make an impression. Read a sermon to the aged. Came home very late and tired ; but, I hope, full of gratitude."

"*Thursday, 17th July.*—Went to Cheddar club. *An affecting sermon.* The whole was prosperous. The

box so rich that we were able to advance the allowance. The people were very clean, neat, decent, and apparently grateful. P. delivered a useful exhortation. Got home very late; but it was a day to excite much thankfulness."

"*Sunday, 20th July.*—P. and I not being very well, stayed at home. Lord, supply the teaching of ordinances by Thy Holy Spirit! Take from me all hardness of heart and deadness of spirit! Prayed with some comfort, but my mind ran too much upon other concerns. Have much business on my hands at this time, and though it is all of a charitable, religious nature, yet still the detail of it draws away my soul and thoughts from God. When shall I be purified?"

Our last and very fatiguing event for the year soon after approached—our little Mendip feast. Everything happened so similar to that of last year, that I have scarcely a remark or memorandum to make on the pleasures of this day—the children nearly the same in number, the dinner consisting of beef and pudding, eaten with the usual appetite. The same pleasure appeared to dance upon the countenances of all who possessed a kind heart. The farmers' wives attended as before, riding in the waggons with the children, and behaving cheerfully, and with good humour. We still continue to think this one of the useful parts of this day of pleasure. However, the gaiety of our feast was considerably abated by the arrival of the Cheddar children without their great

leader, Mrs Baber, who was left at home very ill in bed.

This day proved to us that the Christian warfare has its difficulties, and is subject to abuse. The innocent appearance of these poor children, looking forward with delight to their promised day's feast of beef and pudding, earned by a year's labour at their Bible, Catechism, Psalms, &c., one should have imagined, could scarcely have given rise to an ill-natured suggestion of Satan himself. However, our neighbours thought proper to load us with every sneering epithet, and every low kind of abuse. We were, perhaps, surprised that they could possibly invent spiteful objections to this simple entertainment. However, it served to remind us that we should examine our motives, and take care that even simple pleasures might not interfere with strict principles.

Poor Mrs. Baber's attack we found was attended with cold shiverings and alarming symptoms of a fever; but more favourable accounts succeeded, and hope revived. But on the following Sunday we were sent for, and found her, to all appearance, in great danger. A violent complaint in her bowels had taken place. However, the day following, the medicines began to operate; hope once more enlivened us; her speech and complexion returned in a considerable degree, and she was supposed to be out of danger. She recovered so far as to be enabled to sit in a chair and eat calves'-foot; but in ten days a relapse took place—a violent sickness ensued. We were led to expect such a

symptom would be dangerous ; it proved so, and in two hours brought on a mortification, and speedily put an end to her important life. She bore her dying testimony to the truths she had taught, and constantly declared all her trust was in the merits of her Redeemer, and all her desire to go to Him. In her intervals of pain, her conversation, or rather her sentences, were highly instructive and impressive—her texts of Scripture particularly happy. She was very submissive to the will of God, whether she died or lived, but prayed, if she should be restored, to be enabled daily more and more to make known the Saviour's name, and urge the people to have no trust but in Him.

Her funeral was a singular one. Almost the whole parish attended. Her two hundred children followed the corpse, then the people ; but what rendered it peculiarly affecting was, every creature had on some little badge of mourning, according as their little pence could be spared. The better sort of people in handsome mourning. Mr Boake attended from the house, which was esteemed a mark of great respect. The procession was immensely long, solemn, and affecting ; no noisy, clamorous grief, but a quiet, silent sorrow ; the footsteps scarcely heard, and the tears running down their poor faces to the ground, their little ragged pocket handkerchiefs not being large enough to contain them. The church, on our entrance, appeared already full. Mr Boake gave us a most admirable funeral sermon—the text from St John : “ For where I am, there

my servant shall be also." He said it was selected because it was the last the deceased made use of to him. He bore his testimony in the most honourable, in the most Christian-like manner to the reformation she had brought about in the children, and to the great progress both young and old had made in religious knowledge; exhorted the old people; addressed and implored all ages to continue their good behaviour to her daughter, praying, very affectionately, that a double portion of her mother's spirit might descend upon her. When the last solemn office was performed, and "ashes to ashes, dust to dust," was pronounced, the people threw in their nosegays—it was the prettiest, most affecting little trait imaginable. The whole concluded with a suitable hymn, sung, or rather sobbed, by the children. For a long time there was no getting the people or children from the grave—a last look was the desire of every eye. The undertaker, usually callous by profession, wept like a child.

Thus closed the last scene of a mistress of a charity-school, who had not a shilling of her own to give; yet such was the power of the true faith she had so zealously spread amongst this once benighted, but now enlightened people.

It is no less affecting than instructive, to sit with them, and hear the private history of their first taking pleasure in religion, and of the growing influence she had over them; of the altered lives they are now leading—many turning, and some already turned, from sin to holiness.

[There is a published letter of the writer of this journal to her sister Hannah, who was then an absentee, wherein, as in the above description, she relates, with inimitable pathos, the particulars of this affecting funeral. There, as in her journal, she dwells upon the extraordinary silence by which the deep grief of the mourners was expressed—a circumstance which may remind a classical reader of the *silentium triste* and the *tacita mœstitia* which Livy represents as the demeanour of the Albans when they made their farewell exit from their city, and of the mode in which Josephus represents the demeanour of the Jews at the capture of Jerusalem, when *ουτε θρηνος εν ταις συμφοραις, ουτ' ολοφυρμος ην—βαθεια δε την πολιν περιειχε συγη*. There are a few pathetic touches in the letter, which it may be interesting to subjoin to the narration of the journal. She observes—"Mr Boake's voice was nearly lost; when he came to 'I know that my Redeemer,' he could scarcely utter it, but to *feel* it was a better thing. On our entrance into the church, the little remaining sight we had left discovered to us that it was almost full. . . . The sermon was affecting and bold. As a proof of the latter, though Mr —, the vicar, was there, and he himself was curate, he said, with an emphasis in his voice, and a firmness in his look, 'This eminent Christian first taught *salvation* in Cheddar.' . . . He was very tender in his address to the children, exceedingly solemn in that to the young men and women, and concluded with a fervent and suitable prayer." After mentioning the throwing

of the nosegays into the grave, she adds—"I was almost choked. When Robert Reeves, John Marshall, and the six favourites, let down the coffin, they stood over it in an attitude never to be described, and exhibited a grief never to be forgotten. They feared, at one time, Mr Gilling must have been taken out of the church." Speaking of the emotion of the undertaker, she adds—"He confessed that, without emolument, it was worth going a hundred miles to see such a sight." She says of the children—"There was no boisterous, hysterical grief, for the departed had taught them how to select suitable texts for such occasions, and when to apply the promises of Scripture; but I think almost tears enough were shed to lay the dust. We returned as we went, save that we had left this 'mother in Israel' behind. When we got the children into the great room, and missed her lively, sprightly figure and movements, every heart sunk. I said a great deal to them all, and wrung their little hearts; for I knew but too well that the world and young blood would make an excellent sponge to wipe out, full soon, the awful lessons of the day. My rough nature generally directs me rather to probe than heal a wound: the natural man loves to patch, but the new piece will tear the old garment." Referring to Miss Baber, she says, "Excellent, laborious Betsy has hitherto all her life been an indefatigable slave; she will now suddenly be called into great power, and Satan, I presume, will be more active about her than ever; therefore the truest tenderness will *be to keep a tight rein ourselves, and let her out*

gradually, as we have not that exalted opinion of the dignity of human nature which some gentlemen and ladies have. I have promised to go next Sunday to open the school, and talk to the people, if I am able. I think I shall go on horseback. Mrs Baber seemed, for the last six months, to have been particularly preparing for death. She had been very bilious, and slept but little. Betsy would speak, and inquire how she did. Her answer was, 'I lie awake, and in pain; but eternity is revealed to me in a manner I cannot, dare not, tell.' She had ceased speaking to the people after the sermon for some time, and made Betsy do all the *important* parts of the business; the *laborious* part she always did.

"I should have thought it no crime to have given a considerable sum to have had you, Mr Wilberforce, and Mr Thornton present. Perhaps such a sight has seldom been exhibited. Oh that the rich and great would so live as to be so mourned! So passeth this world away, and so we go on sinning, and take no warning. Never, never had I such a difficulty to restrain my tongue as at the moment the last office was performed: the people! the children! the solemnity of the whole! the spirit within seemed struggling to speak, and I was in a sort of agony; but I recollected that I had heard somewhere a woman must not speak in the church. Oh! had she been interred in the churchyard, a messenger from Mr Pitt should not have restrained me, for I seemed to have received a message from a higher Master within; and I have long been convinced that

Satan is as often dressed in the garb of prudence as in any other, and as often succeeds in it. How many pious people prayed for her! Mr Serle too! and all did not prevail. She seemed, indeed, to have done her work. I am sure Mr Newton, especially, will lament, because he had seen her so often. How this Cheddar work will now go on no human being can tell; but of this we are certain, it is in the same *hands* now that it was before."

This touching letter appears to have reached Mrs Hannah when in company. She thus describes the occasion, and the feelings it suggested, in an unpublished portion of her journal:—

"When I heard of the death of Mrs Baber, I was sitting with Lord Cornwallis—brave, disinterested, noble-minded, patriotic. Yet, if he wants true religion, I was struck with the vast superiority in the sight of God of the poor mistress of a charity school to the first, and I believe the best, hero of the age, wise and virtuous."

In a letter written presently afterwards to Mr Wilberforce, she uses terms as strong as those of her sister to represent the loss she conceived herself to have sustained in the death of Mrs Baber:—

"I need not bespeak your sympathy—poor Mrs Baber has finished her course. She has fought the good fight—she is gone to possess her crown of glory. The greatness of this loss quite subdues my mind, and I cannot get into a good frame, being, besides, quite stupefied with two days' intense headache. . . . Last night

I was earnest on the politics of France and Flanders ; but to-day Cheddar has driven Robespierre out of my head. 'Why art thou cast down, O my soul? hope thou in God.' . . . How little, in my estimation, are the most brilliant heroes when compared with this dear woman, who has turned many—I had almost said who has turned hundreds—to righteousness."

Again, in a letter addressed to H. Hoare, Esq., she observes—"I am sure Mr Hoare will sympathise with us on the heavy loss we have sustained by the death of Mrs Baber, our incomparable Cheddar mistress. My sister Patty attended her day and night, to the prejudice of her own health. It is pleasing to reflect that she bore her dying testimony to the truths she had so assiduously and so successfully taught. It was very moving to us to catch her young disciples by dozens in corners praying for her. And it is a pleasing proof of the power of true religion that some principal people in the place who had persecuted her, and even thrown stones at her on her first coming, attended her to the grave in deep mourning, self-invited, as did five or six hundred other persons. I mention this to the honour of Christianity ; for silver and gold she had none, but such as she had—prayers, reproof, and instruction—she gave them in the name of the Lord."]

. The almost unexampled prosperity of our little labours seemed at present to require a check from an Almighty hand—graciously intended, perhaps, to check carelessness on the one hand, and self-righteousness on the other ; for at the time we were learning to sub-

mit to the wise decrees of Providence for the loss of our inestimable Mrs Baber, our Nailsea master and farmers had a violent quarrel. It ran so high, as, for a Sunday, to put a stop to the school, to our no small astonishment, as well as mortification. An insult offered the master at the feast by one of these honourable gentlemen, as they are called, gave rise to it. Pride, and a consciousness of really tolerable abilities, seem to be the besetting sins of Mr Younge. Words ran very high; however, the difference in the belligerent powers was, that, on reflection, and after passion had subsided, the power of religion operated on the part of the master in a forcible manner, while the farmer continued bitter and unforgiving. The humiliation of Younge was quite delightful, and shewed he was no stranger to the grace of God. His subsequent conduct was so perfectly that of a Christian, that we were led to hope, should a reconciliation take place, he would yet be greatly blessed to the poor people here. The insolence and unforgiving spirits of these ignorant farmers continued to intercept and inconvenience our proceedings. Wearied out with their obstinate folly, and impatient that the good we wished to do was for the present suspended, we at length ordered the clerk to desire (aloud in the church) the farmers to attend the ladies in the school-house. Mr Hart likewise attended. A curious interview took place. We desired to know the charge they had against our master, as they continued to persecute him, and obstruct him *in his business*. They could allege nothing against

his moral or religious character, or even his industry, but they begged we would be so good as to remove him. One could scarcely have expected so much ignorant stupidity out of the interior of Africa. Mr Hart conducted himself with the spirit of a man, and the zeal of a Christian, through the whole of this untoward affair. He described to them very strongly the visible difference between the condition of this place now, and what it was two years ago. He said that in the summer on a Sunday, after the labour of the day was over, it was sometimes his custom to take a walk for half an hour ; but that he was obliged to relinquish it by reason of the gambling scenes which assaulted his eyes everywhere, as well as the profane swearing his ears : whereas there was not only now decency to be seen everywhere, but something of a solemnity ; nay, he added, at the very glass-houses, though they attended so irregularly, yet even there you saw a decency in their conduct previously unknown, for once he could not pass these places unmolested. They assented to the truth of this ; but, if we pleased, they desired we would have a new master, and to our no little surprise and disgust, declared the man they wished to supply Younge's place was Turner. This is no other than our Congresbury master, whom we are going to dismiss.

After this, nothing but the importance of our errand could possibly have carried us forward ; but the recollection of having been all the morning with young men from eighteen to twenty-eight years of age, in reading

the 8th of the Romans and the 3d of St John, set all difficulties at defiance, and levelled mountains to mole-hills.

When we had contended with these unreasonable men a long time to no purpose, we parted with mutual civility of expression, and an equal want of conviction on both sides. We declined accepting their paltry rent any more, and desired that, if they liked it, they would choose their own master; but that we should not, on any occasion, be subject to their control, or have any of our plans interrupted or altered by them; that, if they obstructed our master in his attempt to do good, we would withdraw entirely from the parish, as we should then feel we had a higher dismissal than from the honourable gentlemen of Nailsea; and would endeavour to employ the same money, the same people, and the same portion of our time, in another village. We gave them a few months to consider of it, and humbly took our leave of Mr Evans the butcher, of Mr Withy the collier, of Mr Alick Coombes the farmer, and so on. We called afterwards on poor Mr Baddely, whose indignation at this people surpasses all words. There we received increased confirmation of the regular conduct and daily usefulness of the Younges, which agreeably served to confirm us in the persuasion that we were acting upon right principles in supporting them against this unreasonable opposition, and gave us hope we should be directed in our difficulties.

The four following Sundays served greatly to revive *us* (*after these, I trust, useful obstructions*); and we

have at length cause to smile over Shipham, the mistresses having at last acquired our mode of teaching; and the children are evidently making very considerable improvement. The bigger boys begin to attend, and behave much better. The young women have stood the nutting season tolerably well; the evening readings go on prosperously. I forgot to mention we had a very solemn opening of the school the Sunday after poor Mrs Baber's funeral. It was extremely affecting and solemn. Miss Baber's prayer was very fervent, and the people were deeply struck with it. This was agreeably confirmed to us a few weeks after, when we spent the day with them. We found a solemnity and a religious zeal about them all, old and young, that is quite delightful. Miss Baber's character and conduct were very good.

[Mrs Hannah thus alludes to the foregoing circumstances in her journal:—

"Sunday, 14th Sept.—Shipham; Axbridge church; Cheddar—a very blessed day. Between three and four hundred, young and old. Seemed very seriously impressed. This has revived my hopes that God will enable us to carry on this very extensive work, in spite of our heavy loss of our dear schoolmistress. Many fresh ones brought in; family prayer spreading. May we be deeply humbled under a sense of our own unworthiness for this work! May Thy glory and the good of souls be our sole ends! *We are nothing, have nothing, can do nothing.*"

Another entry in her journal, of nearly the same

date, bears an honourable testimony to the labours of her indefatigable sister :—

“*Sunday, 31st.*—Went to Congresbury; Sandford; Banwell school and church; Shipham school.—Patty read Walker on ‘If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature’—very impressive. A large, attentive audience. She laboured diligently—expounded Scripture at four schools. She greatly eclipses me. Lord, be Thou her exceeding great reward!”

On the Nailsea business, recorded a little above, she observes :—

“Had a painful, trying day. Much enmity against religious schemes. Opposition, labour, and bodily fatigue. Yet what is this to what the apostles and their blessed Master endured? Lord, strengthen my faith! Enable me to have patience with these ignorant opposers of Thy law. ‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!’ Yet we are encouraged by seeing many of our young men seriously affected. This makes us unwilling to throw up this one school, which I think we should have done had our motives been merely human. This week I visited many scenes of woe in poor-houses. Lord, enable me to rectify some of this evil! I bless Thee, if, in any instance, I am made the instrument of good. Let me be humbled in reflecting that I am only the instrument—the worthless instrument.”

In another entry, dated 13th Oct., she says, with reference to Axbridge and Cheddar :—“Had the great comfort of finding Mr B—— growing more and more vital, and, as the best proof of it, more humble. He

assisted in a serious exhortation at the school. This day my faithful colleague and I had much comfort—near four hundred young and old. Some fear of two or three young men. Lord, preserve them from backsliding! Read an excellent sermon on the new creature, to a seemingly devout audience. God strengthened our faith to stay to read, though we came home two hours after dark. Oh, may we never be restrained by fear or self-love, when any good is to be done!”

“At this time we are distributing Bibles and Prayer-books in all our schools. Lord, give a blessing to them, and a holy direction and aim to all our actions, gifts, words, thoughts!”

“I desired to remember, with particular gratitude, that on this day five years my faithful colleague and myself set up our first religious institution at Cheddar. Bless the Lord, O my soul, for the seed that was that day sown! Bless the Lord for the great progress of Christianity in that region of darkness, that many have been brought to know the truth as it is in Jesus. Do Thou daily turn more hearts from darkness to light. Do Thou preserve them from backsliding. Do Thou prosper the work.”

“*Sunday, 26th Oct.*—Visited Banwell, Sandford, Yatton, and read a sermon at Shipham at night. The days now short, and visits laborious and uncomfortable; and it is dark and late when we return. We are often out thirteen hours; yet the good providence of God has preserved us from evil, and gives us strength and faith to persevere.”]

Axbridge is doing still pretty well, but would do greatly well if we had spiritual teachers, as the children are sensible and promising. Yatton and the smaller schools now took up our attention for some time. Sandford certainly increases, and the children are well taught. Banwell pretty full. But oh ! should Providence ever open a road for us at Yatton in our own way, we might hope great things. At present our hands are tied. All the comfort we derive is, that nearly one hundred children are learning to read the Bible, and we take every opportunity ourselves to impress it upon them.

A visit to Nailsea became now as interesting as it had lately been unpleasant. The school fills very fast, and Mr Younge's improvement in his manner of teaching is very great. The grown-up young men still continue to attend the school, and appear at present not to fall off in their good desires. We made them a visit in the week, examined their writing-books, &c. ; found great order and decency, plans very good, the children much improved in their weekly learning.

Another tour to Sandford and Banwell—pretty well. Ended the day at Shipham—better than pretty well. Eighteen young women still attend. A hundred can read the Bible, and many others coming on. Stayed and read in the evening to a full, attentive congregation. Surely the time will come when grace shall flourish on Shipham Hill !

A comfortable visit to Yatton. It appears as though the children now, many of them, are beginning to understand the Scriptures. It was a day of much satis-

faction. The road will be opened at Yatton, and our fetters taken off.

Good news every day from Nailsea. The dreadful roads prevent our going for a little time, which has given us an opportunity of being doubly diligent at the other schools. I think we did not lose it; but followed closely the schools with the bright children and bad teachers. It served to convince us the more strongly what *might* be done, for in this little time their progress was very striking. We have this week taken leave of all our middle schools, as we call them, leaving the great ones to the very last. These children, when compared with the ignorant, know a great deal; but when put in competition with those of Cheddar, the difference is too visible for our comfort.

Our patience was now a little tried by a very considerable disappointment, in respect of the Shipham mistresses, who have each given a promise of marriage to two young men in the neighbourhood. It is but a very few months since they have been brought to manage the business entirely to our satisfaction, and now they are planning a new situation for themselves! This was a subject of considerable trouble, sufficient to set us upon self-examination as to whether the good of these children was really our prevailing object. However, we sought a new mistress, and began to work upon her by having her to our home, and teaching her in our own way.

A farewell visit was now paid to Nailsea. It was a visit of solid pleasure. The school pretty full, the

young men attentive, and the evening readings crowded. At last, the Younges seem in spirits, and the work appears going on. This was the more satisfactory, from the difficulties we had encountered. It appeared like spring after a black, stormy winter. At this time the Spirit of God is surely to be found here. May it hourly spread !

The farmers came to take leave, with much confusion but great civility, and we parted with mutual good wishes.

And now for the closing scene of Shipham, Axbridge, and Cheddar. The two first tolerably satisfactory ; the last triumphant ; but the loss of our invaluable Mrs Baber still throws a shade over our visits there. This great work, however, is so wielded for the present by her daughter, that regret ought to give place to thankfulness that *she* is spared. The change of life and conduct in full four hundred people, young and old, is so striking and so affecting, that the heart feels what the tongue is incapable of expressing. We read a sermon to a vast audience—Christ, the Good Shepherd, was the subject. Oh that this people may continue to be the sheep of His fold ! A Divine love seemed to pervade them all to-night, which was quite sublime. They sung a parting hymn, and we took leave amidst many prayers, and very many tears.

What are we, O Lord, that we should have been the appointed honoured instruments in Thy hands of occasioning the reading of the Scriptures in this village ! But, being so, grant us increasing humility and increasing grace to press forward in this work !

This has been a summer of great fatigue, trial, and vexation, and it has given us full opportunity for the investigation of motives; and however the nerves may be agitated, and the bodily frame fatigued, who shall ask for higher consolation than this—a thousand children training up to read the Bible? A pleasing circumstance may be added this year—two little girls have taught their mothers to read the Testament.

This is the first year that Mr Wilberforce ever omitted honouring us with a visit, and it was a great disappointment.

It is hardly possible to enumerate the names of those upon whom religion had made some impression. Perhaps the most remarkable is to be found in the family of poor Samuel. Himself, his brother, and sons, have long been very eminent Christians. His profligate wife, affected and struck by the example of all her family, is at length very deeply convinced of the truths of religion, and regularly attends the sacrament. To complete the whole of this poor ragged circle, his old profane mother, who sat and amused herself while they were at family prayers, overcome by the altered actions and changed conversation of two generations after her, is at length brought to confess that the Lord He is God. A few sheep, a little orchard, a field, and a house, are now cleared of all debt, and quite their own. To obtain this, they are meagre with scanty food, and cold with slight clothing. In every view, they are the happiest family we know in the world.

We left Cowslip Green the beginning of December.

The first letter received after our arrival at Bath was from Mr Younge, with a very striking account of a death-bed scene of one of our scholars, a great girl, on whom the instructions she had received at school had made a deep impression. She sent for her brothers and mistress, and exhorted them, in the most striking manner, to attend there, expressing herself strongly respecting the state of her soul, and contrasting its present case with what it was before she went to Sunday-school. She held the mistress by the hand, pointed to her brothers, said she saw angels, and died. The brothers, two great collier boys, now attend constantly.

This was a happy closing of the year '94.

[I append a few extracts from the private diary of Hannah More, containing *her* report of the closing month of this year's campaign :—

"Sunday, 2d Nov.—Axbridge, and afterwards the whole day at Cheddar. Though the weather was dreadful, and we were late at night, yet it was a day of great comfort. Many new ones. Religion seems to be still spreading, and some of whom we were fearful seem more confirmed. O Lord, grant that this people may never rise up in judgment against me, and that, with all my advantages of knowledge and education, I may not fall short of these poor ignorant creatures, many of whom are not called till the eleventh hour !

"This, when the weather permits, is a useful season with me, as I visit the houses of the poor, and carry them some helps against the winter. Lord, grant I may be a faithful steward of the goods committed to

my charge, of my own as well as those of others. I desire to bless Thy holy name for having put into my hands so many means of doing good, and that, when I visit the poor, I am enabled to mitigate some of their miseries. I also bless Thee that Thou hast called me to this employment, which, in addition to many other advantages, contributes to keep my heart tender, and, by constantly exciting in my mind the idea of the wants of others, may help to make me more frugal and self-denying. I thank Thee that by thus being enabled to assist the outward wants of the body, I have better means of being heard and attended to in speaking to them of their spiritual wants. Let me never separate temporal from spiritual charity, in humble imitation of my blessed Lord and His apostles, whose healing the sick was often made the instrument of bringing them to repentance. Yet, while I desire to keep alive a tender compassion for worldly want, I desire also to remember that sin is a greater evil than poverty, and to be still more zealous in teaching their souls than even administering to their wants. Lord, bless those who assist me to bless others, and reward them a thousandfold !”

“*Sunday, 9th Nov.*—I have lately been negligent in self-examination. I resolve, by Thy grace, to be more diligent. My faithful colleague is gone to our schools. Lord, reward her labour of love ! I desire to acknowledge her superiority to myself in many principal parts of our joint-concern, particularly in familiarising Scripture to untutored minds. While she waters others, grant that she may herself be watered !”

"*Sunday, 16th Nov.*—A fatiguing day ; visited five schools. Patty read at Shipham. Many difficulties here. Lord, increase our faith ! Let the discoveries of faith be more clear, the desires of faith more strong, the dependencies of faith more ardent and resolute, and the delights of faith more pleasing !"

"*Sunday, 30th Nov.*—Again kept at home by indisposition ; but my faithful colleague, this Sunday as well as last, supplies my lack of services. Lord, be Thou gracious unto her, and abundantly repay her labour of love !"

"Last Sunday, ten poor soldiers walked in, and heard our sermon at Shipham school. Lord, grant that their hearts may be seriously impressed, as their outward behaviour was solemn ! Perhaps they may hear no more sermons. Awful thought ! Oh, that all serious Christians may insert a clause in their prayers for all the souls which fall unprepared in battle ! We are now about to depart from Cowslip Green : Lord, bless our going out and coming in ! We resign our schools and villages into Thy hand : Lord, let Thy Holy Spirit be with them, and rest upon them, and bless them. Let Thy word run very swiftly ; let it grow mightily and prevail ! Supply the absence of our poor weak labours by Thy mighty power. What is wrong, do Thou reform ; what is weak, do Thou strengthen ; what is right, do Thou confirm and approve ! Give the tongue of utterance to the teacher, and the heart of understanding to the learner. Do Thou supply all *our* and *their* deficiencies by Thy grace ; and grant that all of us, with

those dear and kind friends who assist our charitable schemes, may meet at last in Thine everlasting kingdom, and spend a blessed eternity in singing the praises of God and the Lamb! Amen."

A letter addressed to Hannah More at the close of this year, by the Rev. J. Newton, contains the following pleasing allusion to the pastoral labours of the sisters of Cowslip Green :—

"I suppose it is some time since you broke up your camp, and retired into winter quarters. Now you have left poor Mendip, I shall not so often traverse it till the return of summer; yet I shall not wholly forsake a spot where you have so many flocks and folds. The sheep and lambs in your pasture are worth more than all that ever nibbled the grass of Arcadia or Thessaly; and, if I could be a poet but for one day, I would sing—O how I would sing!—to the praise of Him who committed them to your care. I would praise the Great Shepherd, and pray for the tender shepherdesses, in right gentle lyric strains. . . . Could I make verses on Mendip or Cowslip Green, they must be in the elegiac strain. I have no reason to expect that I shall see them again; yet, here likewise I have a pleasure in thinking I *have been there.*"

CONTINUATION OF THE SCHOOL JOURNAL,

BEGINNING THE YEAR 1795.

As the last year ended with a happy and remarkable account of the death of a very young woman at Nailsea, so the new year opened with an equally affecting one of the death of a young man at the same place, though he was older and more experienced than the girl. The account was deeply affecting, and the young man's conversion appeared sound, and his faith strong. Mr Younge regularly attended him, and his account was very interesting. A collier who lodged in the same house, overhearing their conversations, was extremely struck; and from the time of his death has regularly attended the school, which is of prodigious consequence, as well for the advantage it will be of to himself, as for the influence he may in time obtain over some of his companions.

About the middle of January we were delighted with an account from Cheddar. The village at large seemed in a comfortable state, but a particular account of some young women emerging from that sink of sin and wickedness, the paper-mill, was as agreeable as it was surprising. We have long hoped and waited for this important intelligence. They at present attend the

school with equal humility and cheerfulness, go regularly to church, and hitherto appear perfectly pleased and happy. We desire to be particularly thankful for this important information. Our letters during the whole of this winter were very favourable, considering the unusual severity of the weather, and the abundant snow, which rendered some of the roads, for a time, nearly impassable, where the children live at a great distance.

Very early in May we went into the country, and made our usual first round, opening with Shipham. We began with some fear on account of a new mistress, whom we happily found filling her situation with much credit. Flower, one of our late excellent mistresses, was well married, and Patience, our other, on the point of it. The school was full, and the children in good training, in a very considerable state of improvement. Their numbers very large, considering it is the season of the year when all parents of either sense or industry are striving to get their grown-up children into service. Upon the whole, we had great cause to be very well satisfied with the state of the school here. We then proceeded to Axbridge, where we have generally the felicity of finding things much as we leave them, excepting a tolerable improvement in reading, Catechism questions, &c., which is something. However, we are weary of making this annual remark, and begin to feel something like impatience for a better opening to present itself. The great boys here likewise, as usual, gone to service.

Very little change had taken place at Cheddar. We expected from our accounts great improvements, and were not disappointed. All ages, and both sexes, seem here as one large family of love and harmony, carrying the appearance of union in the one great cause, in the one thing needful. The accustomed mutual and sincere pleasure was manifested on our first meeting. High expressions, and, I believe, really sincere ones, of joy on our return. The pleasure, I apprehend, was mutual. We spent the whole afternoon, and read the sermon to a very full audience.

Nailsea, on the following Sunday, came next in rotation. We found it rather better than on former occasions; the children particularly improved in cleanliness. It being Whitsunday we attended the sacrament with eight young colliers. It was a truly interesting and affecting sight. John Haskins, one of these young colliers, we left as a master. He is very sensible, and has conducted himself with remarkable propriety during the winter, extremely active and regular in his daily life, and at present promises to be one of our most valuable acquisitions. The grown-up girls here are intolerably troublesome; it is with great difficulty we get them to come, and when they do, we find them uncommonly stupid. The work at Nailsea is always attended with peculiar troubles and disappointments; and yet there are such little bright openings as help to quicken perseverance; for instance, the eight colliers, and perhaps twelve or fifteen others, tolerably forward in the knowledge of the Scriptures; but our expecta-

tions and imaginations led us to hope for a hundred in such a state of improvement. The whole school scarcely amounts to eighty.

We are left still to mourn over poor Yatton and Congresbury, though the improvement in common things is very well ; but no more. There is, and ever did appear to us, a prodigious inquiring, and hungering and thirsting, in these two parishes, about they know not what : but, alas ! at present there is not the remotest opening. But He who is all-wise, and who knows what is good for us, can make that opening when He pleases. May the time not be far distant ! Our old mistress at Congresbury died during the winter ; and the mistress of the village school we found in her place, and we likewise found we had gained a *little* by the change.

To our surprise, the excellence of our Sandford mistress keeps together that little school of difficulty wonderfully well, and she improves the children very much.

Banwell, never interesting, is now more disagreeable than usual. The people are disagreeable ; the children, poor things, are disagreeable too. We go on grumbling and teaching, and scolding and threatening, and this day we were very serious indeed, and threw out something of a hint, that without more improvement, we might be tempted to remove. Perhaps this threat may rouse them a little.

Such was the state of the business on our return in '95. The same round of three or four more Sundays

brought forward the time for our first club, which is always first held at Shipham.

It was a gay day indeed ; a great party of our friends attended ; four fine carriages on Shipham Hill at once, was a subject of great joy and surprise to the poor women. Two or three ungrateful ones, we were told, were ripe for revolt, and came determined to complain of their good health always having prevented their taking out any of their own subscription. One cannot make a comment on so stupid an absurdity. However, the appearance of so many genteel people, the richness of the box, with the promise of the articles being soon printed, entirely subdued them, and not a murmur or discontent appeared, and the whole passed off with unusual joy and satisfaction. If people of fortune were convinced of the importance of occasionally mixing with their inferiors, they would most certainly do it, and the effect would be great.

The faults complained of this year in the charge were ingratitude, particularly to Mr Jones.

[The charge was as follows :—

“ Amidst the many opportunities and blessings you have had of late years, I desire you will not forget that one of them is the advantage of an admirable sermon preached to you on each anniversary. It is well for us all to profit by such an opportunity ; and God grant that what has this day been delivered from the pulpit may make a proper impression upon all our hearts !

“ Providence has designed a particular place and situation for each of us ; may we strive who shall perform

our several duties in *that* situation best ! It seems to be *my* particular errand at Shipham to speak the *truth*. You know it has been an annual custom with us to give you our opinion, reproof or encouragement, upon your conduct during the past year, as we are more particularly acquainted with many local circumstances respecting both institutions, and with the morals of the young people. It is impossible that any other motive but your good should collect us together. And pray observe, I am not going to *upbraid* you, or to magnify ourselves ; God knows we desire to be considered but unworthy instruments, though zealous to do you service. It is well for you to recollect the state of things at the beginning of our knowledge of you. It should be instructive to think what things *were*, and compare them with what they *are*. It is a lesson for humility, that you may cry aloud, ‘ Lord, what have we done to deserve such blessings of Thee, that our children should be snatched from destruction, and taught to read their Bible, say their prayers, and keep the Sabbath-day holy ; though too many of us as parents have hindered the good work, by disobeying orders, by keeping them at home, by employing them improperly ?’

“ See how that sounds in a prayer ! And yet if you acknowledge your sins (the principal part of prayer), such confession must be made.

“ Your minister, and some few friends here, can recollect, if *you* have forgot, the melancholy, ragged, ignorant, impudent, lying set of children who first entered these doors ; can recollect how long it was before you

had patience to have your children served—before you had patience to have them cleaned and clothed—and, above all, before you had *any* patience to have them trained for heaven.

“And what is the change? Why, many mothers, as well as many children, have found out that cleanliness and godliness go together; that industry and religion *must* be united; and that there is no true joy but in serving the Lord. If many are brought to this change, let us pray for more; and if *some* have the grace to be ashamed to think that we arrive, after travelling so many miles in a cold, wet morning, before they have the decency to send their children a few yards, let us pray that all will equally turn from such bold, unfeeling ways. Whatever our complaints may be (for though much is mended, yet much is still to be done), yet let us humbly beseech every heart in this company to offer one silent thanksgiving to the Almighty, that, spite of some opposing parents and many bad examples, far the greater part of those children *will* come from a sense of duty, and a love of spending the day according to the command of the Giver of it.

“This sounds like good news—and it is, but it ought to be much better; and what we wish particularly to remark here is, how desirous we are that the remainder should come upon the same principle; but you know (and let every conscience speak to the right person) that there are still too many, for want of better instruction and example at home, who come only for the rewards, *for the feast, for the tarts, for the clothing.*

“ If they and you go on practising this cheat, I warn you to recollect there is One who knows the secrets of all hearts, and whom you cannot cheat on a deathbed. Let me beseech you to think well of this ; and I pray that the children of whom I have made these complaints may speedily be added to the number of those who come from a sense of duty, and therefore of pleasure. Such conduct will secure our favour and kindness, which we cannot bestow equally on the good and bad, nor (we ask your own hearts) *ought* we. Remember that ‘ they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.’ Such, I trust, will yet be the case of many a young person here.

“ In addressing the young women, for whom we have ever been so particularly anxious, I am happy to omit the heavy and sad complaint we made last year, of the meeting idle company in improper places, for the purpose of rioting and dancing. Such meetings, I warned you, seldom fail of ending in the worst consequences, being generally fatal to a young woman’s virtue and character. You can scarcely more rejoice at the consciousness of having *shunned* such improper meetings, than *we* are that these things are no longer *practised*. I trust you will persevere in this reform, and endeavour to bear in mind who has said, ‘ She that endureth to the end shall be saved.’

“ The danger of keeping bad company is the greatest evil that can happen to young or old. The Scripture says, ‘ Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing,

and I will receive you.' May you be 'received' by accepting this gracious promise; but recollect 'the unclean thing' must not be 'touched.'

"I am sorry to be obliged to complain, that some of you are more regular in your attendance when we are *here*, than in our *absence*; yet we hope and believe many find a pleasure in coming, and constancy will *increase* the pleasure. The instructions here will prepare you to be good wives and good mothers, as well as good Christians.

"See what an example has this day been set before you! One of your late mistresses we have had the pleasure to behold in the new character of a wife. In every situation hitherto she has been worthy of your imitation, and we doubt not but her conduct at the head of a private family will be as well worthy your imitation, as it was when she was one of the mistresses of this school.

"Since last year you find we have had an exchange of mistresses. Some family circumstances occasioned it, though the last continue to deserve of us the same favour and good opinion.

"We have been at the expense of adding another master—a solid, knowing young man. Let me *beseech* you to recommend it to your grown-up sons thankfully to accept of his instructions; and we desire you will let your big boys be very constant in their attendance, and not throw away such opportunities as those we now offer you. Pray, don't keep them away for little household jobs; it will be very wicked to do so.

Though you are parents, you have no right to rob them of the privilege of one chapter. How often have we repeated to you, that a little learning will always make them respected by people above them, and every way promote their interest in this world as well as the next.

“There is one thing we desire you particularly always to remember, that whomsoever we place here you are to *respect*, and teach your children to *obey*; and be sure bear in mind this one certain, *positive* truth (it is a truth in which you *cannot* be mistaken), that we are as much better judges than you can be who ought to preside over this school, as the bishops are who ought to be minister of your parish. Let the men and women of Shipham and Rowberrow become honest and good graziers and hoglers. They are placed in this spot by Almighty direction. The very ground you walk upon points out your daily labour. Excel in that—and an honest hogler is as good in the eyes of the Almighty as an honest squire; therefore we wish to recommend you to do your duty in that state of life where God has placed and called you. Every disposition to rebellion against the higher powers would prove how little you are changed in your hearts, after all that has been done for you; and remember that rebellion against rulers first brought on the troubles in France. Grieved are we to say, that in the distress of last winter there were people who *petitioned* against the hand that brought them assistance. Let the consciences of those ungrateful people ask them, if they had the

smallest relief from any *other* quarter. I am truly happy to say that *most* of you here are *innocent* of what I now hint at, but you know who and how guilty many of your neighbours were. Take this short piece of advice from those who love you :—*Practise* but the *doctrines* that are preached here, and you will become good Christians in this world, and happy in another.

“I now turn to the club. A long, severe winter has just passed by ; it has been a trial to the rich, as well as the poor, and particularly to the sick : therefore you, who have been so afflicted, I hope have felt uncommon gratitude for the seasonable relief you have had from the club. You who have been in health have had much cause for thankfulness likewise, in that you have escaped the miseries of a sick-bed, and that your suffering neighbour has had that assistance the box could afford ; and while we have so many kind friends assisting us, I trust we shall be enabled to go on supplying you in this comfortable manner.

“I daresay there is no woman here but will forgive my gently hinting to her, that her own three-halfpence a-week would make but a poor figure in a fit of illness, if it was not for the kind contributions of so many good friends, who condescend to make part of the company with you every year, and to whom, I trust, every member feels very much obliged for *both* favours. My dear women, when we are far away from you, and the winter sets in, believe us it is not the smallest of our comforts to reflect how many children there are upon this hill *who, we hope, endeavour to fear God and keep His*

commandments—that there are some, and I hope will be more, young women who have seen the evil of their former ways, and are endeavouring likewise to amend them—that the mothers of these children have the hour of sickness lightened by weekly pay from the club—that their children, in that hour of sorrow, can read and pray with them.

“That the Almighty has blessed this work so far is subject for gratitude; yet we cannot but mourn that so much remains still to be done. Join with us, my dear friends, hand and heart, to press forward in this business. Be you industrious and obedient on your parts, and may we be zealous on ours; and as we are an *occasional* company here, so may we be an *everlasting* one in heaven! I hope, my friends, you will now shew your religion by an increasing alteration in your daily life. You now know that religion will not *prevent* your rising at an early hour, but *promote* it. Your hard labour will not be slackened, but *increased*; your daily occupations will be pursued with greater *activity*; you will be as alive at your milking, haymaking, hog-ling, and other employments. The difference will be, you may sing a hymn or a psalm instead of a lewd song—you may go home when your labour is over, and, if you have time, a few verses in your Bible will close a summer’s day much better than gossiping out upon the hill, at one another’s doors, and meddling with each other’s concerns. It is far more profitable to get a habit of looking into the Bible, than prying into the secrets of your neighbours. My dear women, we must

endeavour to make every meeting useful. Time is short—eternity at hand—our institutions are all attempted upon religious principles; therefore it is we wish not to deceive you. This is particularly designed to relieve the sufferings of the *body*; our wish is, that the welfare of the *soul* may keep pace. You must be chastised by pain before you get relief here: the *chastiser* is the *Almighty*—the very *affliction* will be sent in *mercy*! 'Tis therefore we are anxious that the knowledge of the Scriptures should furnish you with spiritual comfort, the best support in the hour of sickness. A text of Scripture may give a blessing to a basin of broth; it will assist in giving patience, if it does not relieve your pain. Great are the mercies to be found now at Shiphham and Rowberrow! May the praise be in proportion; and after having *known* the truth, take care you do not *turn* from it. Religion is equally important in every station, and at every age. Timothy from a child knew the Holy Scriptures; and Anna, though a widow above fourscore years old, departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And Joshua declares, 'As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.'

"And oh, may *your* hearts, as well as *ours*, be sufficiently thankful when we contemplate the vast idea of such numbers being able to read the Bible from the instructions they have had at this house! O Lord, impress it upon as many hearts! Remember the advantages of the past five years; but, be sure, regret

the lost opportunities. And we hope that every heart now present will join in petitioning the Giver of all good to continue His blessing on this little work:—And oh, Almighty Dispenser of mercies, do Thou continue Thy favour to this people; open the eyes of their understanding—enlarge their apprehensions—quicken their desires to a further knowledge of Thy holy Word; take from them all ignorance and hardness of heart—all obstinacy and perverseness; grant that, in future, each heart may be full of a sense of Thy presence, and that a care to please Thee may swallow up every other care! Be pleased to bless all the institutions that are carried on in this house, and grant that the several advantages and comforts they are intended to provide, may be received with gratitude from the Giver of them. May His name be glorified for every mercy; and upon every occasion may the praise be given to Him. May every attempt of Thy unworthy instruments be so made in humility, that they may be acceptable in Thy sight. May the knowledge of the Redeemer be increasing among young and old, that they may finally be prepared to sing His praises for ever!”]

Another visit to Nailsea took place about this time. The leaders or heads of the parish continue remarkably disagreeable, obstinate, and ignorant, giving no encouragement to great boys and girls to attend. Therefore, except our young men, the school is too much composed of small children. This day we made very heavy complaints particularly for coming so late, and sending the smaller children of a family, to be out of the

mother's way, and with no idea or wish of instruction. This is a liberty that gives us great offence, and against which we are continually struggling.

The Cheddar Club next took place. The prosperity of it is quite extraordinary, notwithstanding a long sick cold winter. By the kind contributions of our friends, and an increasing number of new members, this box is likewise very rich—a circumstance which never fails to subdue dissatisfaction and exhilarate the spirits more than all our oratory. I think I may safely pronounce this to be the very completest day we ever passed upon any of our meetings, and on any occasion. It was a day of comfort, of pleasure, of satisfaction; and a day that called aloud for our gratitude as well as the women's.

The complaints this year were a continuation of the gossiping, more particularly at the bake-house, and an inattention in not sending their children to school and reading when they happened to be out of service.

[The Cheddar *charge*, thus alluded to, was as follows:—

“As we have settled our little temporal concerns, it may not be amiss to pursue our usual course, and introduce a few sentences respecting those of a more spiritual nature.

“A very short time will make it six years since we were directed, we trust by a good Providence, to visit Cheddar. Near six years are now added to the great account, whether *we* have been faithful and zealous *instruments* for your everlasting welfare, and whether

you have strictly performed *your* parts, by duly attending to the very great opportunities that have now been so long opened to you. When we consider your situation in this point of view, it becomes very solemn and very affecting; and as it is our annual custom to remind you a *little* of our first knowledge of you, so we shall be at present more particular on that subject than usual. May we be enabled to say, as Isaiah said of Israel, Cheddar 'shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation, and ye shall not be confounded nor ashamed, world without end.' We now consider a great number of the women of Draycot and Cheddar as rational, sober, modest, well-behaved, creditable women—some, we trust, rising to the higher character of *Christians*. We do not address you now in tiresome, constant complaints as formerly, nor have we to charge you with the gross negligence of not sending your children to school, or with setting them the most shameful examples. We address you, it is true, as fallen creatures; but as creatures many of whom, we trust, are at length seeking the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

"I believe there are few, if any, women here who will not readily go back with us to the day when we first received your children in this house. You will now easily believe us, when we declare to you it was a moment of the deepest affliction and astonishment when we attended to church the first Sunday the little, disorderly, lying, impudent, half-naked set of creatures; but a gracious God was pleased, as He had promised,

‘to regard the prayer of the destitute, and not *despise* their prayer.’

“And it was well for Cheddar that He had promised to ‘deliver the needy when he crieth, the poor also and him that hath no helper.’ Oh ! what a high gratification is it to us to address you at last with the comfort of the *promises* of the gospel ! Too well you all know its *threatenings* only were suitable to you for a great length of time. It is a great satisfaction to us that you now *know* it to be so. The character we had received of your parish from every neighbouring village was such, that, though greatly shocked, we were the less surprised to find your children such as we have already described. As for your church, we were unwilling to credit the accounts given by what is called the better sort of people in the place. Five women and fifteen men were no unusual number to compose a morning congregation. Drunkenness and indolence prevailed in almost every cottage. Another affecting tale we were told likewise by some of the superior inhabitants. It was the melancholy fact related of your cliffs. The beauty and fame of them are continually drawing strangers to see and admire them ; but they were made the scene of rioting and debauchery. The sacred Sabbath was regularly profaned by scenes exhibited in the cliffs, too shocking and indelicate to be named here. Strangers were sometimes assaulted, who came on innocent parties of pleasure, and not on a Sunday. A creditable woman told me herself, her life was endangered whilst walking quietly through

the cliffs, with a few friends, and the virtue of her companions dreadfully assaulted. Nay, so horrible was the account given us, that one of our first rules related to the cliffs, and was posted up against the cross in the open street. In every view, your situation at this time was truly deplorable.

“My dear friends, you don’t run away from these things—you love to be reminded. You know we often make them subjects of conversation; you know that, at that time, ye were ‘without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.’ We humbly trust and believe it may at length be added, ‘But now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were *far off*, are made *nigh* by the blood of Christ.’ Now, therefore, we long to say, ‘Ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.’

“The variety of sensations that filled your hearts when you began to come for instruction, is best known to yourselves. Pride, Satan’s grand instrument, was at the bottom of all. Well do you and we recollect all the different stages of your unwillingness—your shame—your *half-loving*, *half-fearing* us—the dread of losing your children’s rewards if you affronted us—the *fear* of giving offence to *mortals*, but the *fearlessness* of giving it to *God*. Do you remember all this? At length—oh, rejoice in it!—your children’s eyes were first opened—your children’s altered lives first struck conviction upon *your* hearts: children were appointed by

the Lord of all to bring parents to a knowledge of their lost state.

"The precepts, followed up by the examples, of this house began to set many upon inquiring, 'What shall I do to be saved?' The extraordinary opportunities you had at length became precious to you.

"The diligent, active, and truly Christian zeal which was every hour to be seen in the life of her who is now no more, at last struck upon many hearts. Numbers eagerly sought every opportunity to gain advice and direction. Can any one remember the moment when *she was unwilling*, or out of the way? Oh, no. Which of you will not recollect the first Sunday she was supposed to be in danger?—not a face you met but had a handkerchief held up to it—the children not knowing what to do—the whole parish seemed as it were *still*. Did you thus mourn her because she had *feasted* you, and because her door was every evening open for riot and merriment? You lamented her, on the other hand, because she first told you you were miserable sinners. It was a secret unknown to you before. But bear in mind she likewise told you you had been purchased at a *vast* price; and when she discovered to you you were *sick*, she directed you to the Great *Physician*. This was the friend that is taken from you; and to the credit of your grateful feelings, I must declare to this company how sincerely you mourned your irreparable loss. A whole parish, I may say, followed her to the grave; and as her *name* is precious to you, so let her *example* be likewise. Mrs Boake, as well as ourselves,

and many of you who kindly contended which should be most useful to her in her illness, can bear witness of her dying testimony to the precepts she taught, and to the truths she had so boldly declared to you. Providence, in taking her to Himself, has, as it were, taken off a leading-string. *Human* helps are very comfortable, and very important; but the business is not *completed* till you rest entirely on *Him* who is the *Rock* of our salvation.

“We have hitherto continued every institution here in the same manner we did in her lifetime. Your own, good sense will lead you to reflect, that our *further* continuing here now rests entirely on your *OWN* conduct. You must join hand and heart with Miss Baber (who continues zealous and active to serve you) to go on promoting the great cause. So many of you are now convinced of the importance of a sober, Christian education, that your guilt will rest upon your own heads if you detain a child a single hour from school. How repeatedly have we pointed out to you the very great advantage of giving them a little learning, in order to advance them in the world! You are now, in general, convinced of it. Therefore, my dear friends, even the best of you can scarcely be aware of the *size* of the sin, when you now *unnecessarily* detain them from school.

“Pray remember, in this little conversation with you, that though this is the *first* time we have *commended* much, yet we do not feel yet as addressing ourselves to *saints*. Pray make this necessary distinction.

“ We consider many, many of you as much convinced of sin, considerably changed in your daily lives, and more and more desiring to walk with God ; but I beseech you to humble yourselves, by recollecting your long *lost* opportunities, your first unwillingness, your great *pride*; and let all your own past offences fill your souls with tenderness for others. Do not be rough to those who *still* remain in ignorance. Examine your *own* hearts with strictness. It will be the best method of making you patient and forbearing with *others*. *Self-examination* will be the surest plan to keep *self-righteousness* out of sight—the vilest and most offensive weed that can enter the human heart, as well as the most *dangerous*. Is every woman in Cheddar free from it ?

“ We have endeavoured to wait with patience the time when some of the young women from the paper-mill (a place of dreadful sin and wickedness) would be convinced what pleasures were to be found in the society here. At length an inquiring good spirit, we trust, has brought some of them. This is long-hoped-for, but very good news. It will be well for you all to strengthen their present resolutions by some good advice—to point out your own past errors, and your present state of happiness on account of the change. We shall direct the best improved young women to bring them forward in learning, to give a little food to their poor dark minds ; and, when opportunity offers, do you lend a helping hand. Solomon says, ‘ The tongue of the wise *is health*.’ Pray give them every tender encouragement.

Satan will lose a *stronghold* at the paper-mill if these young women stand *firm*. Oh, let us pray that they may 'forsake the foolish, and live, and go in the way of understanding!' There is one thing in your own families we wish you very much to attend to—that, when any of your children are out of place, or come home from service entirely, you will not then keep them from returning to their duties—that you will exhort them to the same attendance here on Sundays as before. First, it is shewing a respectful sense of past favours (a propriety, not to say decency, always to be observed); and, secondly, they are then at a dangerous time of life, when every parent should rejoice at every opportunity their children can have for advancing in religious knowledge.

"To deserve commendation is the only reward you can give us, and the truest happiness we can know; and it is with pleasure I, at *last*, tell you your children attend much earlier than usual in a morning, and without giving trouble; the best proof that they now *love* it. Pray do not suffer this *beginning* reformation to fall off; and I trust this will be the last time when I shall be driven to speak in higher commendation of the grown-up lads than of the great girls.

"It grieved us last year to be obliged to dwell so long upon the sad and mischievous vice of gossiping. We had reason to hope, from what we then said, and your improvement in other things, that we might have omitted it at present. There are still too many of you who have not yet discovered that a prating tongue com-

monly slanders an innocent neighbour. Even unkind *truths* are often better let alone. We understand that the intolerable gossiping and idle slander at the paper-mill and bake-house, by a few idle women, are sufficient to set a whole village together by the ears. I wish the next time a woman carries her loaf to be baked, she would think what a mercy it is to *have* a loaf in these times ; and it would better become her to find a suitable text of thanksgiving for such a blessing, than to be scheming how she can spread an evil tale about the club, and inventing complaints against the method of payment. A little less *prating* will give more time for *praying*, and *that* will teach you to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. It is much more becoming to be anxious and watchful to lessen the *beam* in our *own* eye, than to spend our time in looking after the *mote* in our *neighbour's* ; and whenever any mischievous slander rises in the *heart*, *choke* it down before it reaches the *tongue*, with repeating the following words, —‘ Do to others as you would they should do to you.’ The Scriptures tell you to be ‘*patient* towards all,’ and ‘shew *meekness* to all,’ and ‘abound in *love* one toward another.’ Now, the slanderer can love nobody. Let us advise all these malicious praters to learn the following text, and repeat it always on their road to the bake-house and paper-mill,—‘ For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged, and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.’

“ Having so often spoken of the blessings of the club, we have the less to remark at present. Surely it can-

not be necessary to point out to you who have experienced them, the prodigious comforts of it during the last long cold winter. The grievous affliction of sickness, added to other inconveniences, must have rendered this money particularly acceptable.

“My friends, bless God you do not want *subjects* for prayer, when the *heart* is *willing*. Think what an anxious, careful minister you have; reflect how many hundreds here can now read the Bible—how many families pray together—how many go to church—how many attend the sacrament; and when you have blessed God for these changes and mercies, then you may pray that still *more* may read the Bible—that *more* families may pray together—your churches be *more* crowded, your sacramental table be *more* filled. And may all here present be enabled and willing to pray that Thou, O Almighty Lord and everlasting God, wilt be pleased, in Thy great goodness, to look down upon us at this time; grant that Thy blessing may be among us at this *very moment*! Oh, do Thou fill these people’s hearts with *gratitude*, and their tongues with *praise*! May Thy grace at length be found in them, that so, being convinced of *their sin*, they may turn to their *Stronghold*—to Him who is ever pleading for them at the right hand of God! Dispose their hearts to hearken to all peaceable counsels, and to comply with all friendly designs; and enable us to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. And grant, O God, that while the outward sufferings will be relieved from this institution, the *inward* change may equally go forward;

and we beseech Thee, that the time may not be far distant when every house in this valley shall be filled with Thy favour, and in every cottage the praises of a Redeemer shall be sung, that so the hallelujahs may be begun on *earth*, which are to make the happiness of *eternity*."]]

From this time we went on regularly in the usual way for several Sundays, nothing material happening but the common mode of teaching and complaining, when we were agreeably surprised with a visit from Mr H. Thornton, who was so good as to visit many of our schools; the first Sunday, Shipham, Axbridge, and Cheddar. They were all full, and he sat by while they went through their usual teaching. Stayed in the evening to the reading at Cheddar; and on the following Sunday, we went to Yatton and Nailsea. At the former place Mr T. went all over the poor-house, and found a dreadful scene of neglect, misery, and ignorance. We then proceeded to Nailsea, and he was so good as to hear the first class go through the 1st chapter of St John, and explained it himself.

We had now a deputation from the parish of Blagdon, of the overseer and churchwarden, with a modest and humble petition that we would be so kind as to come and do *their* parish a little good. The expression was curious; however, on inquiry, we found this parish exceeded in wickedness, if possible, any we had hitherto taken in hand. They acknowledged it was the good character of Cheddar, and the great reformation wrought there, which was the reason of their being

so *bould*—another of their expressions. This sudden desire of a Sunday-school partly arose from an awful scene having taken place just before in their parish,—a woman condemned to death for attempting to begin a riot, and purloining some butter from a man who offered it for sale at a price they thought unreasonable. This affecting event threw the village into the greatest consternation and terror. Had the account been less interesting or solemn, our interview with these deputies would have been almost ridiculous. One of them, full six feet high, implored us with particular eagerness to come, because, he said, there were places where they were personally afraid to go. There is a little hamlet, called Charter House, on the top of Mendip, so wicked and lawless that they report thieving to have been handed down from father to son for the last forty years. The poor woman under sentence of death was an inhabitant of this place; and here it was that these tender-hearted churchwardens wished to send two nervous women, really for the above reason of personal fear.

The extraordinary earnestness of the people, together with Mr Bere, the curate, to get us into the parish, with the uncommon dissoluteness of it, joined to set us upon thinking what could be done. On the other hand, want of health and time seemed to throw a little into the opposite scale. However, the crying necessities of these poor creatures speedily prevailed; and in the beginning of October 1795, we opened one of the largest, most affecting, and interesting schools we had

yet encountered, composed of a hundred and seventy young people, the greater part from eleven to twenty years of age. Three children of the woman who was condemned to be hanged were present.

[The proceedings of this memorable day are thus described in a letter of Mrs Hannah More to Mr Wilberforce :—

“ It was an affecting sight. Several of the grown-up youths had been tried at the last assizes. Three were the children of a person lately condemned to be hanged ; many, thieves ; all ignorant, profane, and vicious beyond belief. Of this banditti we have enlisted one hundred and seventy ; and when the clergyman, a hard man, who is also the magistrate, saw these creatures kneeling round us, whom he had seldom seen but to commit or punish in some way, he burst into tears. I can do them little good, I fear ; but the grace of God can do all. Your friend, Henry Thornton, thought we ought to try. Have you never found your mind, when it has been weak, now and then touched and raised by some very trifling circumstance ? So I felt on Sunday. The principal people from many parishes came to the opening of this scheme for the instruction of this place, which is considered a kind of Botany Bay. Some musical gentlemen, drawn from a distance by curiosity (just as I was coming out of church with my ragged regiment, much depressed to think how little good I could do them), quite unexpectedly struck up that beautiful and animating anthem, ‘ Inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these ye have done it

unto Me.' It was well performed, and had a striking effect."]

Though we have now been so hackneyed in scenes of this sort, yet I think we have been seldom more affected than on this occasion. Nothing we had before experienced surpassed the ignorance of these poor creatures. Not one out of the one hundred and seventy could make any reply to the question, Who made you ? We opened, with rather an increased solemnity, with some select psalms, a strong exhortation, and suitable prayer. Very many tears were shed by the gentry who attended. In the afternoon we led them to church, where all country honours were duly paid. The men belonging to a large club attended with their ornamented sticks, and led the procession. Some neighbouring musical gentry collected together, and sung a very suitable and good anthem in the words, "Forasmuch as you did it to the least of these," &c. The day passed off remarkably well. What an opening did this day present for prayer and increased devotedness to God ! What further honours were this day conferred on *instruments* ! We removed Mr and Mrs Younge from Nailsea to this place ; for since their quarrel with the two farmers, the school has gradually lessened, and now has no proportion to the vast expense. Our former favourite, John Haskins, was so improved in religious knowledge, and so established in his character by the regular life he led, that the whole parish, to our astonishment, very readily consented to our placing him as master of the Sunday-school. The weekly one was

given up on our removing the Younges, the people being not worthy of it. This young collier has a very quick apprehension, and a lively understanding. It is a situation of great honour and power for so young a man, and he appears uncommonly affected with a sense of it. It is a curious fact that a young man in such a situation, who had no sort of knowledge a very little time ago—who, in short, in every respect, was very ignorant, should, from the extreme propriety of his conduct, have so influenced the minds of this stupid race of farmers as that they should suffer us to place him over their children. He possesses likewise a very good judgment in arranging the business of the school—a very important matter.

About this time, we began to give out our annual rewards of books, one to each child, and Bibles and prayer-books as the reward of very great merit. This is one of the pleasantest days in the year, when we are instrumental in spreading good books over so many parishes.

We did not go to Blagdon for several Sundays after we opened, in order to give ourselves the opportunity of forming a little judgment of their capacities; and, at our first visit, everything augured well. An increase rather in number. We discovered many of good understandings, and good memories, who had already made considerable progress in learning by heart. The first question-book was learned through by many, and the grown-up ones understood tolerably the first twenty chapters of Genesis. That which was rugged and

cheerless now began to be cheerful and give pleasure. When they possess but a small portion of knowledge, there is some groundwork for conversation ; but when they are in total ignorance, it is discouraging indeed. The instant they tell one fluently that God made them, and Christ redeemed them, the tongue is loosened, the heart opened, and subject and words are seldom wanted in future. The following Sunday we took our leave of the three great schools, and never did we quit Shipham when it was in so very flourishing a state in every respect. Eighteen fine young women attend on Sundays and in the week in a most regular, orderly way ; above one hundred and seventy children in a very improving state. The fair just over, and passed off with unusual quiet amongst the young people. There has never been a moment when we could so truly rejoice over Shipham, nor were we ever more disgusted at Axbridge. But I pass over that tiresome, laborious scene to the more animated and truly satisfactory one at Cheddar. The school full, flourishing, cheerful, lively. The evening meeting crowded by an affectionate, serious audience, to whom we read a sermon. They sung a very suitable farewell hymn, and we parted with mutual regret, prayers, and good wishes.

Our last Sunday this year we reserved for the new school, considering it still as in leading-strings. The rapid progress made here mixes anxiety with pleasure. One cannot avoid suspecting that novelty may be part of the charm, and that when that ceases, there may be a falling off. This suspicion, however, is not the

particular office of faith. The school is certainly at present improving in a surprising and extraordinary manner. They already sing, repeat a good deal, and understand a little. Besides, the same alacrity continues ; and there is a farmer's daughter who promises well. She is naturally amiable, and catches eagerly at the few spiritual things we have dared to throw out. Indeed, everything seemed uncommonly flourishing when we took leave for the winter.

We left upwards of eleven hundred children in the Sunday-schools, besides weekly schools and clubs ; and there can surely be no self-deception in saying we had never left the whole in such a state of prosperity.

The grown-up young people at Cheddar are now in a very agreeable way. Some time ago we were alarmed with fears that self-righteousness was creeping in. We saw, or fancied we saw, a conceit and a gloom, which gave us considerable uneasiness. A little exertion now appeared wanting ; for a while, vigilance and activity were necessary. This gave them an alarm, and set them more upon self-examination, and all, at length, worked together for good. We talked to them a great deal, and they were not only affected, but shewed strong convictions that they had been wrong by suffering themselves to be led into a most irrational way of thinking, and from that time to the present, they have continued to give increasing satisfaction.

Our lesser schools are, upon the whole, rather more flourishing than last year ; though we wait with impatience for the opening we have long hoped might be

made for us at Yatton. The same dispositions appear in the people on that side of the country, but no possible opportunity yet presents itself for very *striking* usefulness. May the time not be far distant when the Almighty will point out the way and send the means! There certainly is much good soil, whenever it shall be His pleasure to sow the seed.

The family of Samuel Evans, at Cheddar, still continue in the same flourishing state—prosperous above their hopes in temporal concerns, and all flourishing in spiritual affairs, except one son, who has occasionally yielded to temptation.

The young women from the paper-mill still continue firm, leading regular, good lives, and being constant in all their religious duties. Mrs Gilling, Farmer Ford, and the rest of the first converts, do honour to their religious professions by their changed life. On Christmas-day, *two* clergymen were above an hour administering the sacrament. This is Cheddar!

O Lord, be pleased to continue Thy mercies to this altered people, and may an enlarged number be daily brought to the knowledge of Thee; increase the devotedness of Thy poor honoured instruments, and bless the hand of every individual whose benevolence extends to the assistance of these poor creatures! and may every voice and heart unite in prayers and praises for the wonderful and great mercies Thou hast shewn to these ten parishes during the past year; may humility and gratitude be the prevailing sensation of every heart concerned, both rich and poor—God grant it! Amen.

The year 1796 opened with a letter from Nailsea, giving a good account of the school, and of the recovery of John Haskins, who had met with a dreadful accident by the pit falling in upon him, and breaking his jaw. He is now much better ; though the sight of one eye is gone, it is feared for ever. His patience and resignation during the whole of this dreadful suffering, has been that of a very exalted Christian. The two young colliers, his under-masters, have managed the whole business, to the admiration and astonishment of the farmers, as well as ourselves. They were so anxious and so desirous of doing right, that, every two hours, they sent a little messenger to poor Haskins, to say they were going on very well, and begged him not to fret. This little trait was very endearing to us. Alas ! these three young colliers are at present the only managers of this savage, proud parish.

Very soon after this, a letter, full of consolation, arrived from Cheddar. A Christian love, we hope, is spreading over this parish at last, and we hope the enthusiasm is subsided. We have some new children from a distant parish four miles off, who are very regular in their attendance, and they tell Miss Baber, if they continue good and to like it, a great many more boys will come in the spring ; but now their country is under water.

This account was followed by a very good one from Blagdon. Twenty-seven, instead of the odd seven, were at the sacrament, Christmas-day, and the school very

full. Most of these children shew good capacities, and are making very rapid progress indeed.

The winter passed off with the usual letters from all the schools ; we thought sometimes it seemed as though they vied with one another who should send the most gratifying accounts. But at length melancholy news arrived of poor John Haskins. He returned to his work before he had acquired sufficient strength, and the damp of the pit had a violent effect upon his head. We were obliged, therefore, to send him to the Infirmary, where, in a few weeks, he got much recovered.

Early in May we went into the country, and, in our usual first round, received greater satisfaction than we had hitherto done from Shipham. It is now a very fine school, and second only to Cheddar. Peace seemed particularly to pervade the whole hill, an end being put to the lawsuit between Mr Jones and Jacobs, and, the latter from home, great tranquillity reigned. Thirty young women have escaped the various temptations this winter, and had been tolerably regular in their attendance one, and often two nights a-week in the winter, to hear and read the Scriptures. The big boys likewise are found there, and they appeared fixed and steady. Upon the whole, this was a very white day for Shipham.

At Axbridge we expected to find some change for the better, Mr Boake having dismissed our deplorable teachers. So little was done in our absence, and so much of our labour required when present, that it had become too laborious. Mrs Carrol, a decent young

widow, coming to settle in this place, Mr Boake engaged her before we returned ; and faithful Samuel at Cheddar goes cheerfully over every Sunday to teach, till we can get supplied with a master. Unluckily, they were all gone to church, and finding ourselves pressed for time, we proceeded to Cheddar, hoping to enjoy the usual comfort and satisfaction we find there. Mutual and sincere rejoicings took place between the children and ourselves. The school was very full. We had some friends with us, who expressed some surprise and much pleasure at the children's knowledge of the Scriptures. They stood our first examination of this year well, and discovered very great readiness. We have been obliged to draw off some of the elder boys, together with Samuel, to Blagdon and Axbridge, and this creates little jealousies and sorenesses ; but this likewise, though tiresome, gives us some opportunities of reasoning with and humbling them ; therefore, upon the whole, though it has given us some trouble, yet we hope good will arise out of it. Our new school at Blagdon we found in a highly progressive state ; the others, much as we left them, creeping on but slowly, except Nailsea, which was moving a little faster. In June we had our Shipham club, and never at this place had we enjoyed such complete satisfaction. The great order and decency of near two hundred children, and above a hundred and fifty decently dressed women, composed but one part of our pleasure ; for our incessant and unwearied enemy, Jacobs, was there, stayed the whole time, drank tea *with the women*, attended the settling of the club, gave

a guinea himself, and his wife half-a-guinea, heard the charge, and conversed by turns with the company. Thus was this Goliath's pride let gently down; and I believe his satisfaction was even greater than ours, though purchased at the price of a guinea and a half; and as for ourselves, we have infinite cause of rejoicing. He will scarcely now openly interrupt our schemes, and Almighty Power can make a Christian out of Jacobs. May it be so!

None could completely enjoy this day but those who knew Shipham *once*. The change is quite striking; but the same Spirit who brought it to its present state can alone carry it on. The charge this year consisted of a regular account of the whole, from the time of our first opening the school to the present moment—comparing the appearance of the place then with what it is now, and strongly pointing out to them the necessity of keeping a strict watch over themselves and children, notwithstanding that considerable improvement had certainly taken place. The last remark created a general smile, as it was the first taste they had received of praise, and it seemed to be much relished. Much complaint was made against a thin church, and much entreaty to persuade them to fill it. The day passed off with uncommon cheerfulness, and a general satisfaction seemed to pervade every countenance.

A visit next at Nailsea was attended with a very curious event. Some of the stupid (but in this instance wise) heads of Nailsea conceived a desire of placing John Haskins over their children, as a schoolmaster

in the week, as well as on Sundays; and they have consented to subscribe sixpence a-week each to support him, whilst he is receiving his own education. It is astonishing that these sages, who persecuted a very able master, should now consent to a poor collier, of our selection, becoming the entire instructor of their children. However, our business is to swallow great doses and go on. We were glad enough to put poor John to school, and are now giving him a superior education, in hopes of making the children of these wise-heads reasonable creatures and decent companions, as well as Christians; conceiving the possibility of all being united in a farmer's son.

[A letter of Mrs Hannah More, bearing date about this time, conveys a striking view of the awakening amongst the young which was manifest at this stage of their proceedings:—

“MY DEAR MADAM,—Patty has been very poorly indeed; but the weather for the last ten days has enabled us to prosecute our labours with more ease. I ought thankfully to acknowledge that, on the whole, our work is going on prosperously. Who does not clearly see that the work is entirely God's own doing, when He is pleased to do it by such poor instruments? It seems a paradox to say that we have more difficulty and anxiety now in this advanced stage of our progress than we had six or seven years ago, and that we have most to do now in those parishes where, by the blessing of God, we have seen the greatest improvement. *But so it is.* There is great delicacy required in the

management of our young converts. Some of them are very sincere, devout, and holy in their lives : but now and then fall into a zeal so fiery, that it wants cooling ; and then they relapse into dejection and sadness on finding that earth is not heaven, and that they must submit to carry about with them human infirmity, and be still struggling against sin and temptation, as long as they live in this world. I have, however, the comfort to say that hardly any of them have fallen back into sinful courses, and many—I trust very many—are striving after excellence. It is curious to see the ignorant and undisciplined mind falling into the same errors, and deviating into the same eccentricities, with philosophers and divines. Some of our poor youths, who did not know their letters when we took them in hand, have fallen into some of the peculiarities of William Law, without ever having heard that there was such a man in the world ; and I fear they judge unfavourably of my zeal because I have refused to publish a severe edict against the sin of *wearing flowers*, which would be ridiculous enough in me who so passionately love them. I find it necessary, in some instances, to encourage cheerfulness, as austerities are insisted on by some of them rather of a serious nature. Two young and very pious persons, who are over head and ears in love with each other, and whom I strenuously exhort to marry, will not hear of it. They say they can serve God better as they are ; and this would be very well, only that, while they refuse my injunctions to marry, they are spending almost all their time

together ; and though I verily believe that both of them would rather die than commit any wilful sin, yet I have found it difficult to impress on them the evil of giving room for scandal. However, I think they are at last convinced of the danger of reposing too much on their own innocence.

“The excellent young collier, who was so cruelly maimed by the pit falling in upon him, I have been puzzled what to do with. He has too good talents to be sent back to the pit, the damps of which also threatened him with insanity ; so I have sent him to a good school, to add writing and arithmetic to his religious knowledge, and I hope to be able to set him up as a schoolmaster, for the sons of farmers and tradesmen on week-days, and for the poor people on Sundays ; but he will be a good while upon hand, though he now walks twelve miles on Saturday nights, to assist at one of our schools.

“One great object in our establishment of poor women’s clubs has been to back with penal statutes the religious instruction of the schools. This summer I have had the satisfaction of seeing the first dawn of hope on a subject of great difficulty and delicacy. My young women, who were candidates for the bridal presents which I bestow on the virtuous, gravely refused to associate with one who had been guilty of immoral conduct ; whereas it formerly used to afford matter for horrid laughter and disgusting levity. It was a very trying matter to me, for I thought it my duty, at one of our late anniversaries, in presence of three hundred

people and half a dozen of the clergy, to deliver a solemn remonstrance on this very subject.

"I did not think myself at liberty to be excused, for it was a matter paramount to all misplaced delicacy; and I had the pleasure of witnessing a most becoming gravity and exact decorum, in that part of my audience which I most feared, when I excluded from the pale of our establishment a female offender. It is a comfort that she had not been one of our disciples. No small difficulty then remained to prevent the others from being vain of their virtue, and to convince them that, though *she* had been singularly bad, there was nothing very meritorious in *their* goodness.

"The worst of our business is, that having so many places—and all at a good distance from each other—to look after, when all goes smoothly on in one place, something breaks out in another, and hinders the instruction of the children and parents. The teaching of the teachers is not the least part of the work; add to this, that having about thirty masters and mistresses, with under-teachers, one has continually to bear with the faults, the ignorance, the prejudices, humours, misfortunes, and *debts* of all those poor, well-meaning people. I hope, however, it teaches one forbearance, and it serves to put me in mind how much God has to bear with from *me*. I now and then comfort Patty in our journeys home at night, by saying that, if we do these people no good, I hope we do some little good to ourselves.

"I should not send such petty details to any one else;

but as you are engaged in the same warfare, and will, I trust, be doing good long after I am forgotten, I thought you might pick up some encouragement from knowing the difficulties which have been encountered by those who have trodden the same path before you. . . . I desire to have little to do with the great. I have devoted the remnant of my life to the poor, and to those that have no helper; and if I can do them little good, I can at least sympathise with them, and I know it is some comfort for a forlorn creature to be able to say, 'There is somebody that cares for me.' That simple idea of being *cared for* has always appeared to me a very cheering one. Besides this, the affection they have for me is a strong engine with which to lift them to the love of higher things; and though, I believe, others work successfully by terror, yet kindness is the instrument with which God has enabled *me* to work. Alas! I might do more and better; pray for me that I may.—Yours very affectionately,

“H. MORE.”

In another letter, written near about this time, she says, speaking of her schoolmistress at Cheddar:—“She has many teachers under her who are paid one shilling a Sunday. Once a year each young person receives some articles of dress; but, having so many other schools to run away with our money, we cannot do quite as much for any as we could wish. I should add, that we have about twenty young men—apprentices, *servants*, &c.—who attend the whole Sunday with the

humility of little children ; and these, as they try hard to get a few clothes, we think it right to help with a small present. Amongst the collateral advantages resulting from the clubs, one is, that the women who used to plead that they could not go to church because they had no clothes, now come. The necessity of going to church in procession with us on the anniversary raises an honest ambition to get something decent to wear, and the churches on Sunday are now filled with very decent-looking women."]

Some little sorenesses and contentions at this time took place at Cheddar among the young men—some jealousies and envyings. The necessity we were under of withdrawing them for our occasional use at Blagdon and Axbridge, I fancy, has caused it. However, in a few weeks, by a little soothing and some reasoning (but not without considerable trouble and anxiety), things seemed hushed and quiet again ; and the school was never more flourishing, seldom less than two hundred, often many more ; so that we were obliged of necessity to keep our own teachers at home to assist in their own school. The improvement was so great at Blagdon that they could be well spared. Some of the young people there, to our surprise, were already become tolerable teachers. It was a pleasing circumstance to us that the first we engaged were two young threshers, Thomas and William Baker, who were already employed as teachers in their own school ; one of them a married man, but who had regularly attended as a scholar from the opening of the school. They are a pair of very pro-

ming, spiritually-minded young men. There are several great boys who seem likewise promising, and very attentive. The numbers here keep up very well indeed.

Cheddar club took place next. It is very prosperous and rich, partly owing to a healthy winter, and partly to liberal contributions of our friends. This, like Shipham, was also a day of peace, quiet, and harmony. Mr Boake preached his farewell sermon, Mr Drewitt having just succeeded him in the church. A kind providence seems to preside over Cheddar. Seven years ago, they had a galloping curate from Wells, careless, inattentive, uncivil. Next succeeded Mr Boake, who lived at Axbridge, only two miles distance. During his ministry here, he became himself a sincere gospel preacher, visiting the people much in their houses, whether sick or well, and performing his duties like a faithful pastor. On his gaining the living of Brockley, a general alarm took place lest they should again be deserted; and our fears were also very great; but the same overruling and gracious God seems to have unexpectedly provided an amiable and spiritual successor in Mr Drewitt; and I must not forget an attention of the rector, and a compliment of the bishop, who both agreed no clergyman should come to Cheddar but with our entire approbation, and no one who would not assist and countenance all our schemes. What an encouragement is this to perseverance! We could not be more surprised than at this unexpected piece of complaisance; but the higher gratification was, the *prospect* of a kind-hearted, useful clergyman. The

charge at the club this year expressed our pleasure at the fulness of the church and school, but our hope that both the one and the other may be yet more crowded. Above all, it contained strong cautions against every degree of self-righteousness.

The lesser schools of Sandford and Banwell are still going on, struggling with difficulties, but preserving the usual number. I must make the old remark—they are certainly learning to read the Bible, and God's grace must do the rest. Some great girls at Sandford seem, however, to be making a tolerable progress. I am driven to make also the old report of Yatton and Congresbury: little done, but great openings, if our hands were not tied. Our waiting here has been longer than anywhere; where the prospect seems best, we do the least. We now gave the first rewards at Blagdon, to a full, flourishing, and already well-informed school. The overseers, who came by way of deputation from the parish when we were first invited to assist them, have behaved with uniform consistency. They regularly visit the school, not for a few moments, but for a long time, standing with great humility for hours at a time. They also come in the week, and submit to be taught with the simplicity of children. This augurs well, and will probably make an important opening in the Cheddar manner. Towards the latter end of the summer, we were severely tried at this favourite Cheddar. Miss Baber, contrary to the good advice of all her friends, attached herself to William Evans, one of our masters, a serious young man, but much beneath

her in every respect. This determined us to prepare for parting with her, having fixed our resolution of not subjecting ourselves to the inconvenience of a young family, which would certainly render the mistress incapable of performing her school duties. This was a matter of infinite trouble and inconvenience; yet we foresaw that some future good might rise out of it. Miss Baber had managed her regard for this man so indiscreetly lest we should dismiss her, and did so many foolish things in order to conceal it from us, that all her accounts were confused and irregular. The power we had been obliged unavoidably to invest her with, had raised her vanity to a dangerous height, and evidently was injuring her usefulness. She had so far forgot herself as to give offence to many of the parents—a thing of consequence. We wished to get the people into an idea that we were to change our mistress whenever we chose, without its being the cause of any uproar or conjecture; that the thing was to be as we saw fit, without anybody's making remarks.

To bring a great scheme of this sort to some degree of perfection requires great toil and labour, yet the difficulty of setting it on foot bears no proportion to the arduousness of carrying it on. The dispositions of some to enthusiasm, of others to mistake and misrepresentation, are evils of a vast and trying size, and produce more anxiety to the mind, and puzzle one more to know what is right to be done, than can easily be imagined. However, poor Miss Baber's dismissal took place in *the middle* of October, just at the anniversary of the

seventh year from our beginning operations at Cheddar. Surprising is the alteration of this place since that time! By God's blessing much has been done, but very much is left undone. It is a comfortable circumstance that the change of our clergyman has not been for the worse. Our loss in Mr Boake seemed very great; but his successor, Mr Drewitt, promises so well, and his living in the parsonage is so desirable a change, that we dare not complain. He not only sanctions the school (which we should have thought much of, even had he done no more), but he pays great personal attention, and every other Sunday goes himself to the school, and already is beginning to expound very prettily and very simply. One thing I must record, highly to the honour of so young a man. The Sunday after Miss Baber left the school, bad weather and particular business prevented the new mistress and ourselves from attending at the school or evening reading. The people came at six o'clock as usual, and Mr Drewitt was so good as to attend himself, and read and explained a lecture of Archbishop Secker on the Catechism. This attention and condescension won upon the people most exceedingly, and their attention and gratitude affected him very much. I trust and hope the spirit and piety of this night's conduct will bring added graces to this young man's heart.

[This trust and hope were gloriously realised. The spiritual growth of this excellent young clergyman appears to have been very rapid. He soon became all that the author of this journal hoped to see him. But

his bright career was quickly closed. He died in the year 1803, at little more than thirty years of age.

About two years before his death, he put upon record a striking testimony to the value of the school, and other plans of usefulness established in his parish. He writes of them as follows :—"So powerful has been the influence of Mrs H. More's school in bringing my parishioners to church, that from the period of the establishment of the school to the present moment, the average number of the persons who attend the church and sacrament has (according to the lowest computation) increased more than fourfold. This circumstance sufficiently accounts for the hostility with which the Methodists have ever regarded Mrs H. More's institutions. I also beg leave to state, for the information of the public, and in opposition to the calumnies which have been so industriously circulated, that the plans for instructing the children and their older relatives at the school and evening readings, are circumscribed by every precaution which appears to me needful or practicable, in order to guard against the smallest abuse or irregularity. The whole economy of the school is under my direction and control, and nothing is done but what I, with my whole heart, and to the best of my dispassionate judgment, approve ; and I must declare that, in improving the morals of my parishioners, in rendering them loyal subjects, sound churchmen, and rationally devout Christians, I derive, from Mrs H. More's institutions, an assistance which I cannot rate too highly."

The value of this testimony is the more enhanced by the high Christian qualifications of him who penned it. Of this, the following extract of an unpublished letter of Hannah More speaks in no ordinary terms. The letter dates Oct. 26, 1803 :—

“ My life has this summer been a lively epitome of this world—such a miscellaneous compound of sorrow and dissipation ; the latter arising from a greater overflow of company than I ever experienced, and the former from the death of a greater number of friends than I ever remember to have lost in the same space of time. Among the most to be regretted of these, I must reckon (in spite of the *Anti-Jacobin*) my most valuable and accomplished friend, Mr Drewitt, at the early age of thirty-one. I have hardly ever met with such a combination of elegant and virtuous qualities in the same person. The last act of his useful life was to raise two hundred and ten volunteers in Cheddar, and his last sermon was a most spirited and patriotic exhortation to them.* It was from his enemies I heard the highest commendations. Alas ! he has now no enemies ; not a tongue but sounds his praises. The lord of the manor of Cheddar, his warm friend, a man of great fortune and character, walked at his funeral as chief mourner, at the head of eleven respectable clergymen. Patty and I also walked in the sad

* Mr D. was led thus far to deviate into politics by the dangers of his country at that fearful crisis. On one of the occasions, we are told, when he was addressing his rustic hearers on their duties and obligations as good subjects, one of them stepped forward, saying, “ Sir, you have spoken enough ; do get us some arms, and we will try what we can do.”

procession. The funeral sermon was preached to above two thousand auditors. I believe there was not a dry eye in the church. I own I feel almost less for his excellent very young widow and three babes than for the parish to which, for seven years, he had been a true shepherd. Such were the last honours paid to an obscure, vilified country curate. It is remarkable that one of his calumniators died on the same day. May God have had mercy on him !”

An obituary of him, inserted in the *Christian Observer* a few days after his death, observes of him that “he was endowed with talents which would have supported and adorned a much higher station,” but that “his active piety and distinguished humility eminently qualified him for that humble but important sphere which he was called by Providence to fill. While a student at Christ Church, Oxford,” says the writer, “he had cultivated that taste for polite literature for which that college is justly distinguished. His singular modesty and native gentleness of manners, joined to a pleasing vivacity, and a sparkling but most inoffensive wit, rendered his conversation peculiarly engaging. His acquirements were considered by him not as objects of display or amusement, but as additional means for promoting the glory of his Creator and Redeemer. His love of letters, his fondness for music (in which he possessed considerable skill), were all rendered subservient to the great cause which it was the main object of his life to promote ; nor did he suffer any subordinate pursuits to intrench on that time which was con-

scientifically devoted to the spiritual interests of a large parish. He was the diligent shepherd of a numerous and affectionate flock, nor did the sufferings arising from an infirm constitution ever lead him to omit or lessen his labours. Sincerely attached to our excellent ecclesiastical establishment, he equally revered her discipline and maintained her doctrines. Zealous without any tincture of enthusiasm, and correctly regular without lukewarmness, he was a faithful preacher of the gospel of Jesus Christ."

Mr Drewitt lies buried in the chancel of Cheddar church, where a mural monument has been erected to his memory by his parishioners, "to record his worth, their gratitude for his labours, and their grief for his loss."

From the following entries in Legh Richmond's diary, it appears that Mrs H. More, having been complimented by the vicar with the power of nominating a successor to the curacy, had applied herself to him:—

"*3d Jan.*—I have been delighted, and, I hope, profited, by Biddulph's funeral sermon on Mr Drewitt. Oh that I were like him! I now wonder that I had not more correspondence with that holy man. I shall ever think with pleasure of my introduction to him. God bring us together at the last! I trust my resolutions gain strength. O God, in Thy mercy strengthen me! May my thoughts now close with blessed Drewitt, and sink to peacefulness with a blessing on the meditation!"

"*7th Jan.*—Surprised by a letter from Hannah

More, to invite me to succeed Mr Drewitt at Cheddar, or to recommend a curate. Oh, I am unworthy, could it be brought about! Yet what a field to act upon! Lead me, O Lord, to that which is right! Shall I make any overtures to remove there or not? It has filled me with mingled contemplation and solicitude. Is it a call from God, or ought I rather to do His work here? Direct my heart, O God, from doubts and wanderings into Thy paths!"

"8th Jan.—My heart heavy in reflecting how unworthy I am to think ever of succeeding Mr Drewitt. To be placed in such a parish, with such neighbours and friends as that country would afford, might be an unspeakable benefit to me and my dear M., but I hardly dare think of it. Lord, direct me for the best!"

"10th Jan.—Much perplexed what to say to Mrs More. Surely, if vanity wanted food, it is here—to be solicited by a Hannah More to supply the place of a Drewitt! But a sense of unworthiness, thank God, represses emotions like these."*

This interruption in the journal will not, I trust, be unacceptable to the reader. It thus proceeds:—]

* Mr Drewitt was the author of several small publications. One of them, entitled "Why are you a Churchman?" passed through six editions. Another, published anonymously, entitled "A Call to Union," is reviewed in the first volume of the *Christian Observer*. Exemplary as he was, yet he was repeatedly aspersed in public prints—insults which he bore with the utmost meekness and composure. "No asperity of language," says Mr Biddulph, in his funeral sermon, "dropped on these occasions from his lips; nor did I ever see his spirit ruffled by the unmerited reproach which he received. But he committed his character and cause to Him that judgeth righteously, indifferent to the opinion of men, while conscious of his own integrity in the matter."

On the Sunday following, we opened with our new mistress, Thomson. In age, sense, and piety, she appears very much to resemble her admirable predecessor, Mrs Baber; and we pray that the Almighty will equally prosper her endeavours, which we have reason to think will be sincere. The house was crowded both with children and elderly people, and we had, though an anxious, yet a prosperous day for the seventh anniversary of Cheddar. The annual rewards of books now took place, and for the three following Sundays we were busily employed in distributing them. A second and a third visit was paid to Cheddar. All serene and prosperous. The new mistress seems pretty well fixed; she is both composed and active. The school and the reading are certainly much more numerously attended,—indeed, crowded day and night.

We now ended our visits this year at Yatton, Banwell, and Congresbury. The two former in a creditable state. At Yatton the boys have advanced the most; they appear to have the best capacities. We have long wished for a fair occasion of closing the little school at Sandford. The difficulties have been tiresome, and the advantages have borne no proportion to the trouble and expense. The distance—three miles from church—was a matter which could never have been remedied; but the shattered health of our mistress made her wish to decline it, and no other person could at all be found to supply her place. We, therefore, put an end to it entirely. The parish is situate between Banwell and Shipham; so that the great boys and girls living near-

est to Banwell go there to our school, and those on the Shipham side to our school there. Thus is an end, as we hope, properly put to this small, though expensive and troublesome concern, and our consciences made easy, by so happily disposing of the senior children.

It is wonderful that, after such strange difficulties, after so many and such provoking trials, we should really have a prosperous and flourishing school at Nailsea, with our poor collier at the head not only of the school but of the parish; and when we go now, the heads of the place are obsequious, and devoted to us in the highest degree, and, under us, they permit poor John to teach them all. No comment can be made upon this, but to wonder and go on. We took leave of the school this year amidst all their smiles, attentions, and good wishes.

At Axbridge our new mistress is likely to make a creditable, if not a religious school. To our utter astonishment, we have an evening reading of near a hundred people in that little dirty town, with many smart, well-dressed young men and women. A good scolding at length brings the children clean; and we parted this year with something in the distant form of praise, at which the children smiled, as well as ourselves.


Shipham is now a close rival with Cheddar; both, in numbers, considerably above two hundred each. But one very remarkable circumstance should be noticed at Shipham. From every house in the parish, where there is a child, we have one. This is quite singular, and a proof of the credit of the school. I think we

may venture to say, the children of these two schools are able, in some degree, to converse upon the Scriptures ; and here I believe the children love us so much as truly to regret our going, and sincerely to rejoice on our return. The young women of the Tuesday reading go on pretty well, and the *Fair* day went off better than ever remembered. The worst thing we could discover to have happened on this eventful day, was one girl dancing a few country dances, but we hope with none of the usual attending circumstances.

Mrs Thomson is well received by people and children at Cheddar. Mr Drewitt, our comfort more and more every time we see him, gives encouraging hopes of Mrs Thomson's zeal and abilities being such as we could wish ; and we took leave with considerable peace of mind, arising from this circumstance, and the increasing prosperity of the school, evening reading, &c.

We have been extremely anxious, and Mrs Bere still more so, that our Sunday evening reading might be introduced at Blagdon ; and it accordingly took place, to our no small joy, the Sunday following, with great success. We began with Bishop Wilson, hoping we shall proceed to higher things. We left the country in a striking state of prosperity, and, I trust, deeply impressed with a sense of it.

Our first letter brought us the sad intelligence of our favourite, John Haskins, (whom we had been educating with such care during the summer,) having been seized with dreadful convulsions, the consequence of his accident in the pit last year—not unusual, it seems.



This letter was succeeded in a few days by another, informing us of his death.

This was a great affliction, and a great blow to our proceedings. How we are to carry on our Nailsea scheme at present we cannot conjecture; for though there are three good collier boys as under-teachers, yet John, our favourite John, had the best head. Our business, however, is to submit cheerfully, do our best, and seek another without repining. This being the last day of the year, it is well to do everything with a submissive spirit—with a spirit of penitence for past commissions, as well as omissions; and to pray that it may be the Lord's will that our schools may flourish under His almighty protection, and that Thy favour, O Lord, may attend all those who assist us in the work. Amen.

Two very good letters from Blagdon began the year 1797. The Sunday evening readings go on well. One of the Stephenses from Charter House (who had been tried for murder, as Mr Bere told us) was beginning to attend both the school and evening reading, with much attention and some apparent seriousness. This was an event of consequence, as this young man's continued attendance may probably hereafter influence others of Charter House.

[In a letter addressed to Mrs Z. Macaulay, which appears to be dated in January of this year, Mrs H. More thus alludes to their operations at Blagdon:—


“Patty and I did not close our campaign till near Christmas. It has pleased God to bless our labours very signally in the last summer. The new school,

which you may remember we used to call Botany Bay, has prospered beyond our hopes ; and I desire to feel humility and gratitude when I say that, among the many who, I hope, are beginning to turn from darkness to light, I may add that no small number of them have been actually tried for capital crimes.”]

Our next intelligence was from Shipham, and it was good ; informing us that our young women have been standing firm hitherto. May increasing strength be their portion !

Mrs Thomson’s first letter now arrived. All well at Cheddar, with an increase in the evening congregation. The teachers go on harmoniously and well. Thank God ! This has been a hard fight. Mr Boake informs us Axbridge is unusually flourishing, and Mrs Carrol conducts herself with much prudence and perseverance. And this account was followed up by a second letter from Cheddar, with a satisfactory report.

Congresbury school, so little encouraged and so poorly taught, has long been a trouble and expense, bearing no proportion to the little good done ; and as our large schemes make great demands upon time and money, we have been watching for an occasion which might enable us conscientiously to dissolve it, as was the case at Sandford. Such an occasion now presented itself, in consequence of an atrocious action committed by the old schoolmaster, whom the heads of the parish had recommended, and to whom they were very partial. We seized the moment of dismissing the old rogue, and putting an end to the school, with the in-



tention for the future of sending the Bible sets to Yatton.

We now received a letter of the highest importance from Blagdon. I shall transcribe a passage, as I wish not to lose it. It says—"That two sessions and two assizes are passed, and a third approaching, and neither as prosecutor nor prisoner, plaintiff nor defendant, has any of this parish (once so notorious for crimes and litigation) appeared ; and, moreover, warrants for wood-stealing, pilfering, &c., are quite out of fashion." Such is the passage in the letter.

Early in the spring we went into the country, and found everything in so similar a state to that of last year that nothing remains to be said of a new nature, except that we have loud calls for increasing thankfulness. All the schools very full, and the attendance during our absence had been pretty regular. We found Mrs Thomson a prudent, orderly woman, though our opinion of her capacity was but low. However, the excellent young teachers of our own training whom we have there will prevent any falling off for the present, and the young ones are certainly coming forward very prettily. Our most striking visit on our first rounds was at Nailsea. The two young colliers, whom we left under John Haskins, had carried on the school during the winter entirely by themselves. It could not be otherwise, John Haskins' death having taken place after we quitted the country for the winter, and therefore it was out of our power to make any alteration till our return ; and the spiritual improvement of the parish

was left entirely to the care and management of Tommy Jones and Johnny Hart, as they are called ; but a Higher Power not only presided over, but greatly blessed these two poor youths, who are concealed from all human sight in the bowels of the earth six days out of seven, and on the seventh day they emerge, like two young apostles, to instruct and enlighten the rising generation, with a cheerfulness, humility, and spirituality, that is necessary to be seen to be believed and fully comprehended ; and we can with truth assert that we have no teachers of any age that excel them. What adds much to the astonishment we feel is, that the influence they possess over this stubborn parish is equal to that which they hold over the children ; and these once sulky farmers bind themselves in promises and forfeits that they will in turn attend the school, for the purpose of inquiring into the state of it, and publicly reprove the children if necessary. After the strange treatment we have suffered from these ignorant, proud people, the above conduct must speak for itself, without any remark of mine. I must not omit to say that we now take our meals in turn in the dwellings of these agreeable, polished families ; for, as we have removed Mr Younge, we have now no house where we can eat our cold meat. Perhaps our next surprising event this summer is the extraordinary improvement of the school at Axbridge. Mrs Carrol has worked a great reformation in the material points of decency and cleanliness. They are likewise now as well skilled in knowledge of the Scriptures as almost any children we have.

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Happily our clubs this year passed off smoothly, pleasantly, and comfortably. They are both wealthy ; Cheddar very rich. The good order they are brought into, and their submission now to our advice, lightens the labour and anxiety of this part of the work, and prevents much of the fatigue, except for the day, which is considerable.

The Sunday evening readings at Blagdon are much increased, and at Cheddar the house is quite full. A large, grave, solemn audience : the greater part, we have reason to think, come in earnest. The congregation at church is also prodigious.

It is now the beginning of November, and the above short account comprehends the outline of the summer ; the usual fatigues, agitations, and vexations filling up the intervals.

At this time the Nailsea school is increased to one hundred and forty, and is kept up with a zeal and spirit equal to any we have, and our astonishment is extreme. It is now December, and we are preparing to quit the country. Every school unusually full, every reading crowded, and, to conclude the whole, Jacobs and a large party attended at Shipham the last reading. Numbers came to petition for books suitable to set up family prayer. We had friends with us, who were extremely affected. We leave the country much dissatisfied with Mrs Thomson. Her conduct and her manners are good, but the children do not improve, and she has an underhand way of ingratiating herself with the people by specious words, and not correcting the children.

From a strong suspicion of her want of powers, we have laboured here as much this summer as though the school had been in its infancy, greatly fearing the children would fall off. By this means, we have reason to think, it never was so flourishing, nor the children possessing more knowledge. But we end in being uncomfortable and watchful. Axbridge evening readings are beginning greatly to flourish, and Mrs Carrol growing in grace very fast.—May the Almighty continue to pour down His favours upon all our institutions! May humility be daily increasing in us, and zeal hourly be strengthening! May the blessing descend upon all who assist us in a pecuniary way, and may our teachers be taught of thee! Amen.

The year 1798 opens with a letter from Bath, our Yatton master, with very tolerable news; the school, for that place, unusually flourishing, and the Congresbury children increasing and attentive. This union of parishes certainly succeeds remarkably well, and is particularly interesting to the children; and whatever catches their attention has its uses. A general round of good letters immediately succeeded, and it is hardly to be distinguished at this time which school (of the larger sort) is in the greatest prosperity; none, however, excelling that of the two colliers at Nailsea, for increase and improvement. Blessed be God! these are extraordinary mercies. Mrs Thomson growing more and more artful, and daring to use extempore prayer; and we more and more uneasy. We were not sorry

that by a mistake in a message, we had an opportunity of parting with her in February, instead of May, the proper time ; and I went down to Cheddar, in order to dismiss her and introduce Mrs Inman, our new mistress. By comparing notes with Mr Boake and Drewitt, we had great cause to rejoice we were enabled to get rid of her in so quiet a way. She was introducing much cant and abominable self-righteousness ; never correcting the children ; paying the club-money indiscriminately ; using every artful means to ingratiate herself with the people. As soon as she left us, she set up readings on the same evenings we had ours, and inflamed the people with wild, enthusiastic expressions. Some were weak enough to follow her ; but our own regular people, of whom we judge so favourably, never forsook us, and the school increased instead of diminishing, to her great mortification, though she certainly has succeeded in disturbing the minds of many of the most ignorant.

April.—A succession of good accounts again arrive, and from every part. The schools, in our absence so far in the year, never doing better, if so well. May Divine grace be prayed for, and received, that activity may not be slackened, and the work continue to flourish !

We returned, as usual, in May. We found everything so similar to the state of things in the last year that I have scarcely a remark to make. Shipham, the first in order, full. Mrs Barnes, a well-meaning, poor, ignorant creature, doing to the utmost of her power ;

a good schoolmistress, but no powers of explaining or enlarging upon the Scriptures. That is left, in our absence, to the care of two excellent young teachers of our own training. Axbridge flourishing very greatly. The importance of a clever mistress is here strikingly shewn ; for much is done, with half the trouble to ourselves. The children, once so filthy, are now remarkably neat and clean. Her evening readings are become very important ; quite a grave congregation. She has met with great difficulties, and sneers, and opposition from the gentry of this town—almost all illiterate and low. Her conduct was calm and persevering, and she now goes on not only quietly, but prosperously. Mr Boake, living in the place, was her support and sanction ; but now he has quitted it, and is gone to Badgeworth. The young card-playing curate is likewise gone. Cheddar school extremely full. Mrs Inman promising well ; but Mrs Thomson has turned out a sad hypocrite, and continuing her opposition reading has disturbed the minds of some of the more ignorant ; and, in short, bids fair to give us a great deal of trouble. However, the important part of our work is certainly flourishing. Near three hundred children in the school, and I read a sermon to a full audience. We have every reason to think Mrs Inman will, in a few months, get into all our plans, and submit to our rules. No fatigue, no labour is anything compared to the increasing anxiety of providing and teaching mistresses. But our prosperity requires such trials and difficulties to keep us on the watch.

Blagdon we found in a steady, uniform course of apparent growth in grace ; great decorum ; great peaceableness. The school in a good state of improvement. The evening reading was very interesting and affecting. The whole people stood up, and, with the modesty and simplicity of children, suffered the master to stand forward and state to us the particulars of their behaviour during the winter. It was an extraordinary proceeding ; for the parish officers were among the number. It was at the desire of the justice we were to be publicly informed of the extraordinary decorum of the men on the day of their club, which had just taken place, and their conduct, it seems, had struck all parties, as well as themselves. We ventured to infer from this that religion was evidently operating upon their conduct, and were much rejoiced at it.

We found but moderate comfort at Yatton. Numbers tolerable, but almost all small, except Farmer Baber's sons, who have never yet slackened.

The Congresbury children are constant and improving. The light that once we hoped to see now disappears again, and as there are only a hundred children, generally of a smaller sort, the school does not at present seem to answer the end of either time or money. The present prospect of good seems low, and we cannot, without some considerable inconvenience, go to any other school the same day.

Our two collier boys at Nailsea we found greatly flourishing.

[There is an interesting entry in Hannah More's diary relative to this visit to Nailsea :—

"Sunday, 10th June.—Went to Nailsea. Lord, fill my heart with gratitude for the blessings of this day ! Found all flourishing. One hundred and forty children taught the Scriptures by two young colliers, whom I taught their letters ! Glory to God !

"How varied is my life : on Thursday dining with the Prince-Bishop of Durham—on Sunday with two religious colliers. Both, I hope, will turn to some account ! I would be cured of all delicacy, and delight in the company of a Christian collier more than in that of a witty and great man, if he were not pious. Met with an accident coming home, but no injury. Oh for a more thankful heart !"]

The school extremely full, and the children extremely knowing ; the farmers attentive and civil to the greatest degree. The number of those who had compelled themselves into a promise of visiting the school in rotation was increased, and one blundering-looking farmer, whom we did not recollect to have seen before, said, "I have got Mr Hart to tie me down to attend with the rest." They forfeit a shilling, and the winter's non-attendance among them all had produced fourteen shillings, which was expended, by joint consent, upon gooseberry tarts for the children. A few weeks passed on very quietly, till the first rewards, and Shipham club began to fill every hour of our time. We had a very great meeting at the club. Mr Fry, one of our promising young clergymen, preached a most admirable

sermon. This neighbourhood, once so destitute of the gospel, is now more promising. Mr Drewitt, our curate at Cheddar, is growing into great seriousness, and already preaches extempore, and extremely well. Mr Boake has two churches very near that, and Windcombe has a very promising young man. At Axbridge, contrary to all the schemes and artful plans of the rector, there is a young man of no bad promise; but should he, under the influence of Fry, Drewitt, and Boake, become a serious preacher, it is much to be feared he will not long be curate of Axbridge.

Cheddar club now came forward, and a prodigiously fine one it was. Young James Vaughan preached a most admirable sermon; another of our young bright and promising preachers. Perhaps it may be well worth recording that Mr Richard Vaughan and Mr Philip Miles made part of our audience, and, if they spoke truth, none were more delighted or more deeply affected, and they have since made great report of their feelings, and how deeply they were struck with the behaviour of the children and the good conduct of the women—above all, with the fulness of the church. It is nearly, if not quite, as full on a Sunday, and that in the winter.

[In Hannah More's diary I find the following reference to this meeting of the Cheddar club:—

"12th June.—Cheddar club. Vaughan preached well and boldly. His own father was there. I hope this day touched him and others. It was a truly prosperous day. Patty and I had much peace of mind. A great

collection, and seeming seriousness in all. I was ill many days after with the heat—a necessary correction for this prosperity.”]

Whilst our schools and clubs were thus flourishing, Mr Fry, and a little party of religious friends, had met with some striking exhibitions of ignorance at Wedmore, the next parish to Cheddar, at the distance of four miles. They were very warm in their accounts of the populousness, as well as wickedness of the place, and urged us to take it in hand. On the first glance it appeared an impossibility. Time, distance, money, health, all rushed at once upon our minds, and served to render it at first impracticable; but, overcome by the shocking, increasingly shocking, accounts of their sins and ignorance, we suffered ourselves first to *think*, and then *speak* upon the subject, though with fear and trembling. The zeal of these young men is extremely delightful. The doors of usefulness here gradually opened upon us in a way scarcely to be resisted with our views of things, and with our abundant blessings upon our past schemes and opportunities. We accordingly were prevailed upon to go to the village, which we found immensely large, with a prodigiously great church. The parish, we were informed, was the largest in the diocese, consisting of seventeen hamlets. We made the usual calls, and were civilly received. We were prepared to meet with a cold reception, and some resistance, at the house of Mr B——, the richest farmer in the place, an ill-looking, coarse man. We visited him; he treated us decently, but his wife would not

appear. She had expressed herself before to our young friends in a very strong manner against the school, vehemently declaring it was a very wrong measure ; the poor were where they ought to be, and where they were placed by Providence. They were intended by Him to be servants and slaves ; it was pre-ordained they should be ignorant, and it was a shame to alter the decrees of God. Her husband said to another person, a Sabbath-school was not wanted, for that when they gamed or rioted in the churchyard on Sundays, he sometimes went and cursed and swore among them a little, and, as he was overseer, they then dispersed ; and what did people wish for more ? The people in general were clamorous for the school, and eager and urgent that we should come among them. At length we desired they would meet us on a Sunday, and, the curate being our fast friend, we obtained the pulpit for Mr Boake, who opened the whole affair in a most sensible, simple, and affecting manner. The greater part of the congregation was extremely touched with the whole discourse ; but the most interesting part, perhaps, was that in which, with much emphasis, he declared no subscription would be asked. An evident satisfaction reigned over every face. When the service was ended, the enemies to the cause walked, or rather shuffled, off as quick as possible. Those who were friends remained, and drew up to the middle of the church, where we were standing, surrounded and pressed upon by crowds of parents and children. They very handsomely declared not only their approbation,

but thankfulness for the intended scheme, and for the trouble we were likely to be at. The eagerness of the poor was very fine and very affecting. One creditable old woman threw her arms round a parcel of fine little creatures, and eagerly exclaimed, with her eyes running over, "Now my grandchildren will be taught the way to God." Many little interesting circumstances took place during our long debate, when most of the heads (except the few inveterates) attended us till we got into the carriage; many good wishes and blessings mutually passed as we drove off.

[This curious scene is the subject also of a letter from Mrs Hannah More to a friend, and the reader will not, perhaps, be displeased to see the accounts of the two sisters placed in juxtaposition:—

"MY DEAR MADAM,—When I wrote to Mr T. about setting up a new school, I did not at all know of the scenes which have since opened upon us. I then only meant a little scheme in Shaw's parish, which would not require a great deal of our personal attention; but if the new plan be put in practice, it will probably be the largest thing we have ever undertaken, and if it were *not* large, it would not be worth the great distance, difficulty, and expense attending it. I desired Mr W. to communicate it to you. Now pray tell *him* that on Sunday we went down to reconnoitre, and, if ever anything *can* be done, it must be through the very fire. We had borrowed the pulpit for a friend, but the opposition we met with so damped his sanguine spirits that he had not courage to preach, because, he said, his

indignation would make him imprudent, and his imprudence would make me angry. Boake, however, had prepared a very judicious sermon. Patty and I, though not more convinced than he of human depravity as a doctrine, yet being longer accustomed to its practical effects, were hardly moved at all. The great man of the place, illiterate, but very sensible, is a shrewd, speculative *Atheist*. The next, a farmer of £1000 a-year, let us know that we should not come there to make his ploughmen wiser than himself; he did not want saints, but workmen. His wife, who, though she cannot read, seems to understand the doctrine of philosophical necessity, said, 'The lower class were fated to be poor, and ignorant, and wicked; and that, as wise as we were, we could not alter what was *decreed*.' To this the husband subjoined, 'Very true; besides, he liked the parish well enough as it was; if the young men *did* come and gamble before his house of a Sunday evening, when they might as well do it further off, it was only for him to go out and curse and swear at them, and they went away; and what could one desire more?' Before we went to church all these encouraging and ingenious things were conveyed to us; and, during the prayers, I took out my pencil and wrote across the church to B. to be sure to mention in his sermon that the *ladies* would defray all the *expenses*—that they wanted nothing of the parish but their countenance, desiring that, after service, the approvers of the institution would stay to give their support, and the enemies to propose their objections. This bright thought had

a most happy effect. B. repeated three times that no *subscriptions* would be asked; and every heart was cheered, and every eye brightened. We had, after sermon, an hour or two of discussion in the church.

“Poor Fry had been so shocked at such, to him, new instances of depravity, that he said not a word, but looked ready to faint. The opposers were, however, by this time so softened that several actually got warm enough to declare they had *no objection* to the ladies coming: and one rich man clapped his hands, and declared he believed it would turn out a very good *job*. It was affecting, in the meantime, to see the poor stand trembling behind, lest the project should fail.”]

In about a fortnight we promised, if possible, to open the school, though no house yet presented itself that we thought would, by any means, suit our purpose. Soon after, Mr Eyre, the curate, invited Drewitt to preach. It happened to be the Sunday before we purposed opening. At the end of the sermon, the clerk got up and read a paper, desiring all those who intended to oppose the school to meet at the church the Friday following, signed John Barrow. Mr Drewitt instantaneously rose and desired the parents and children to meet next Sunday morning at nine o'clock, as the school would then be opened. The calling for meetings so opposite set everybody in the greatest consternation. The poor feared, the rich smiled. However, on Friday they all went to attend. I know the result of John B——’s farmers’ meeting. On account of his great wealth, he has in his power some valuable

members of society. Two amongst the number he made sure would sign a paper he had in his hand, the purport of which was to oppose the school, with a long column of lines under, to put the opposition names on. This lordly savage called first upon a person on whose estate he had a considerable mortgage, and, with all the impudence of wealth, in vulgar language ordered him to sign. His reply was—"Mr ———, though I am much in your power, yet I am still a *man*," and refused his name.

The next owed him a great sum of money. To him the village despot called aloud, "Come, *thou* ! sign." He answered—"No ; though I am in your power, I will never put my name against this school." In this way he received answers from them all, and never obtained a single signature. He then vented his rage, in the most abusive language, upon the poor, powerless curate, foaming with passion, and declaring to them all, that the day the school was opened would be the beginning of such rebellion in England as had taken place in Ireland and France.

On finding he did not succeed, he left the church, and was pursued and hunted to his own house, to his great dismay and mortification, he exclaiming—"Then it is all over with property ; if property is not to rule, what is to become of us ?" On the Sunday following, we went for the purpose of opening the school, without a house, and no permission to teach in the church ; our rich adversary took care to prevent that. However, people and children all assembled in an orchard, and

there we opened the school in the usual manner, by a little exhortation, a psalm, and a suitable prayer, standing up to our ankles in weeds and grass. We taught in the afternoon, dividing our time betwixt this orchard and a poor dark kitchen they lent us, and we were occasionally sheltered from the almost scorching rays of the sun either in that or a shed in the orchard. Mr Fry attended and worked hard during the whole, well mixing humility with zeal and activity.

The incendiary conduct of B—— and his very few adherents compelled us to be thus rapid in our motions, lest the people should cool, or, on the other hand, be imprudently inflamed against B——, and be guilty of any outrageous behaviour towards him. Many people feared that the idea of losing the school, or of having it postponed, would raise some sudden vengeance against their great enemy's house or barns, which would have been very grievous to us.

We now procured a very promising master—his name Harvon ; but yet no house. Mr Fry was so good as to attend there with him for the first time, our engagements taking us to the other side of the country. They were attempting to teach them to sing one of Watts' Hymns for Children, when down ran one of the farmers (a great friend), crying out to Mr Fry—" Oh, sir, I am afraid this must be Methody, and if so, I cannot give it my support." Fry assured him it was no such thing ; it was impossible, for that he was a clergyman of the Church of England, and bound to support its interests. He said he was glad of it, for " he

had a great fear of anything of Methody, as once they came and preached under an apple-tree of his dear mother's, and after that the tree withered, and never bore any more fruit. The parish, in consequence of this, called a vestry, to see what could be done, fearing, if they continued to come, all the orchards in the parish would wither and decay. They therefore agreed that, the next time they came, they would drive them away by throwing stones and rotten eggs at them ; which they did, and succeeded." This happened in the enlightened eighteenth century ! I make no comment.

Whilst this was going on, a violent opposition took place amongst the great folks at Axbridge against our evening reading. It was proceeding too successfully for the great enemy of souls not to raise an alarm among the worldlings. A new curate came about this time, not calculated particularly for the conversion of his fellow-creatures, having been the master of the ceremonies at the last place where he lived. However, he appeared good-humoured, and we seized on him first by treating him with great civility, and inviting him to our clubs and our house, and he appeared much pleased with our notice. But the ordinary gentry of Axbridge poisoned his mind, worried him into a distaste for the things which were going on, and prejudiced him shockingly. He has but moderate parts, yet does not seem ill-disposed, if left to himself. He threatened, however, to set up an evening lecture in the church, in order to demolish our evening reading. Had that been the case, we ordered our mistress and

the people, by all means to attend the church. However, the trouble of *putting together* two sermons instead of one cooled the gentleman's ardour, and it has not yet taken place.* Our *worldly* clergy began now to be busy, and set their faces pretty strongly against our little *righteous* set. In order to do it completely, as he thought, the curate and justice of Blagdon, being on a visit at Axbridge, preached a daring sermon openly against the Trinity; and, not content with this, did the same in his own parish, and indirectly preached against the school. The whole parish was thrown into confusion, and from a full school, and considerably above two hundred at the evening reading, it all at once fell off to thirty-five. It was now time to rouse a little. We went ourselves, called the people together, and H. made a long speech to them, threatening to take away the school, if an immediate alteration did not take place. A religious farmer confessed that the terror of the people was very great, fearing to offend the justice, as he ruled them with a rod of iron. Here was a depth of iniquity and hypocrisy such as we had not met with before. However, he was brought to shame, and came to our house in great agitation. We taxed him with his own letters of approbation which we had from time to time received. This flashed conviction in his guilty face, and he was brought again to

* It may be well to note here, by way of contrast, what Mrs H. More says of Mr Drewitt of Cheddar:—"Poor Drewitt preaches most faithfully to them on Sundays, and gives them a lecture in the church on Tuesday evenings, all for £25 per annum."

confess before witnesses the extraordinary benefit the school had been of to the parish. This acknowledgment being made, the school and reading filled again rapidly.

After long watching, waiting, hopes and fears, the gospel is at last brought eminently to Congresbury by the ministrations of Mr Biddulph. Here was another active scene for Satan, and, as usual, he was not idle. Our religious farmer, Baber, at Yatton, and Mrs Avery, our mistress, took all the children to Congresbury church, as both the parishes are united in the school. It was a great feast to both to hear such a preacher as Mr Biddulph. But Mr Wylde took great offence at it. He called a little convocation of clergy, who summoned the farmer and mistress before them, to receive their public reprimand for daring to go to hear a Methodist. But the overpowering and apt texts of Scripture quoted upon them by the farmer, and the calm and sensible replies of the mistress, threw the clergy into the greatest confusion, and they were glad to put an end to the scandalous debate, threatening the mistress, however, with their vengeance.

Banwell has been going on much in the old way, that is, tolerably ; no creature countenancing or taking any pains about it. Poor Mrs Chapman was indefatigable in calling upon the worthless parents, and keeping up the number, which was near a hundred.

Nailsea goes on, for the present, prosperously, with our two poor colliers, and gives us the least trouble of all, and full as much improvement as is to be found anywhere.

Shipham has been a great trouble this summer, on account of the mistress, a poor, ignorant, vulgar creature. No teaching to our minds in our absence; so that, instead of general examination when we go, we are obliged to work hard, and bustle among the backward children, which is a great waste of our time. We have never tried a married couple at Shipham, and have now some thoughts of it. Perhaps a master in the house might have some influence upon the great boys, whom we have never recovered since they were decoyed away by the new rector of Rowberrow, that they might become singers and increase his congregation. It was a wicked action, and he will find he must account for it at the day of judgment.

We followed up Blagdon two Sundays successively. On the second, Mr and Mrs Wilberforce,* being with us, were so good as to go. The school was again pretty well restored, and the old numbers appeared at the reading. It was a happy, comfortable day, upon the whole. May God's grace more abound among them, that such interruptions may not take place again!

[This visit of Mr Wilberforce is thus noticed in Mrs H. More's diary:—

"23d October.—Wilberforce has been here three days. Went to Blagdon school; full and flourishing. Peace seems restored, and good seems to be doing.

* It is an interesting fact that Mr and Mrs W., "agreeably to a sort of vow of his of many years' standing," spent this first Sunday after their marriage at Cowslip Green. "He made his bride," says Mrs H. M., "set out with an act of humility, by passing her first days in a cottage, and the Sunday among our poor schools, &c."—*MS. Letter.*

But so extensive are our concerns, that when peace is settled in one place, war breaks out in another. Lord, I bless Thee for having shewn me this is not my rest. Yet there remaineth a rest for the people of God. Am I of that number? Oh for more faith! Could not see Wilberforce on Monday, being in bed from headache."

The large extent to which these charitable labours were indebted for their funds to Mr Wilberforce and Mr Thornton, may be judged from a letter of the former, addressed, a few months previous to this, to Hannah More. He there says:—

"I have talked with Henry Thornton concerning the Somersetshire operations, and we have agreed that £400 per annum should be allotted by us to that service. Mrs Bouverie's money in Henry Thornton's hands is to furnish £200, and he and I £200 each. . . . I need not say anything, in addition to what I have before expressed, of my earnest *impetration* that you would bear in mind that your best contribution, a thousand times over, is of trouble, time, and personal exertions, and your great object should be how you can furnish them in the most abundant measure and the longest continuance. If by giving £200 or £300 of your own, you abridge your personal contributions for one year, the operations would be a loser by the bargain, to say nothing of the pain you make us all feel by not calling on us freely for such pecuniary supplies as may be wanting. You are the mainspring of the machine, and it is your business to keep that in order; ours to supply subordinate *movements* (I did not mean

a pun, but a post-chaise now occurs as one of them). Do not think me tedious in reverting so often to this well-known remonstrance. When I was with you I saw it was still needed ; and I am like the man who preached for thirty years against drunkenness, because his parish still continued the vice.”]

We now introduced Mr and Mrs Meyrick, our new master and mistress at Shipham, and spent a long day there in putting them into all our plans, which they seemed to understand very readily, and receive with great humility and teachableness.

Affairs seem greatly more prosperous at Wedmore ; the persecutors appear, at least, to be quiet, and in time I hope will be converted.

We closed the summer by reading at Shipham, and teaching the whole afternoon, further to initiate Mr and Mrs Meyrick into the method. The reading was pretty full ; yet still but few men. We took a solemn leave of them, and their outward appearance was grateful and affectionate ; I hope the heart had some share in it. The school is pretty full, and some forward children. The young women seem to be collecting together, after being dispersed, we fear, by the ignorant and extraordinary conduct of Barnes, our last mistress. If these new teachers should succeed, there seems a very good promise at Shipham.

Our first letter after we got to Bath was from Wedmore, with a very good account indeed ; the great folks not only quiet, but civil. A brother and sister of the rich Barrow not only called in at the school, but sat

two hours with the master, and behaved with great respect; and their mother comes of an evening to the little reading which the teachers carry on together, as we have no room yet for our great affairs. Farmer Stone, the *Methody* man, has sent his son, for the master to do as he pleased with him.

Considering the state of things in September, and comparing them with those of December, the progress is great.

The year closed with an account from Shipham. A fever had broken out there, and much sickness of every kind; but our work was going on very well, and the mistress much liked. If I look back in my journal to the time we first began, I believe I shall find no year close more prosperously than the present, whether we consider the numbers, or the progress everywhere making in religious knowledge. To God be all the glory! Amen.

The year of our Lord 1799 opened with a succession of very favourable letters from all our schools, which, I think, continued till the latter end of March, when we began to grow a little uneasy about Wedmore, and to suspect that our master, though a worthy man, was rash and indiscreet. A prodigious soreness against him took place. Many silly charges were advanced, and the heads began seriously to set him at defiance, and to grow troublesome. During all this uneasiness, we were building a large school-room, and getting a most comfortable house ready at a great expense. At Blagdon, likewise, Satan was busy, through the instru-

mentality of him who called himself a preacher of the gospel, and had the immediate care of these people's souls. Malicious tales were advanced, and the master here, likewise, was cruelly misrepresented as an enthusiast, and as misleading the minds of the people. Some uneasy letters passed upon the subject, in reference to both parishes. Everywhere else was peace and harmony, and great prosperity, excepting sickness at Shipham, which was dreadful. Our new mistress shewed herself indefatigable, and, by paying such attention to them in their sickness, gained a great ascendancy over their minds. It was an opportunity also of getting footing in their houses, of which she made very good use.

At the usual time in May we returned into the country, and found the sufferings of the poor at Shipham had been very great. A hard winter and a bad fever had produced much misery, and Mr Jones said, that but for the relief we sent them, and the women's club, they would have dropped down dead; but it was pleasing to find that afflictions seemed to have been sanctified to them, which appeared, as we thought, in their conduct, by producing a very full school, every part of the house crowded, and the evening reading full also. The parish uncommonly orderly and quiet. Mrs Meyrick had been indefatigable, and was the first mistress we ever had that promised fair to do the business well in all points. Her husband is worthy, but moderate in abilities; however, as we make but a poor figure with the men anywhere, we are glad to have them moral and sober.

Axbridge school we found in good order ; not very large, but very promising, and improving. The evening reading had been much blessed in general, particularly to two farmers' families, who really seemed to be in a most promising state ; and they attended the school as well as the reading, whenever their occupation would permit. We were very much struck with them, and found them very solid, very interesting, and very full of inquiry.

We found Mrs Inman at Cheddar, as we left her, faithful and indefatigable, with a very, very crowded school ; three hundred children that *will* come. There was a very fine evening reading—Mrs Gilling thinks the greater part sober Christians, all decent—and the room and gallery both full. Upon the whole, this was a promising first day, and seemed to portend an auspicious summer.

In spite of all the sneers and malevolence at Blagdon, yet the scene, on our first visit, was deeply interesting—a fine, well-instructed, orderly school, and a very comfortable, though not a large, evening reading. Many refrained from coming out of fear ; therefore those who were present, one might conjecture, were sincere, and they appeared so.

Nailsea school was full, our young colliers humble, the farmers civil, and the clergyman attentive. This extraordinary school flourishes remarkably—forty-two well taught in the Bible, and thirty in the Testament ; besides a great number coming on in inferior books. *The exact* strictness and faithfulness of these young

colliers to our orders is quite surprising. They have hitherto never deviated in the smallest point, and they are now very sound masters. I do not know that we have any better. The good character that is given of the school, and the effect it has upon the parish, as related by the leading persons, is extremely gratifying, and we trust that, in a moral sense, it may smooth their rough roads, and clean their dirty ways.

At Banwell we had no visit to make, having put an end to the school just before we returned. Mrs Chapman being removed from the parish, we knew no person on the spot that could or would at all speak to the parents, who are an ignorant, dirty set of people, and who now took the liberty of sending only their babies, whilst they kept at home all those of their children who were of an age fit to learn.

[In her tract entitled "Hester Wilmot," Hannah More has touched with her graphic pen upon this evil,—a sore trial which almost all conductors of village schools have to deplore, without well knowing how to remedy the case. We have *now*, indeed, our system of instruction for infants, and our infant-schools, but we have still to lament that our children are frequently removed from our instructions when they are coming to the age most *fitted* for instruction. The passage in Hester Wilmot is as follows:—

"'You may have some of these little ones if you will.' 'No,' said Mrs Jones, 'I will not; I have not set up a nursery, but a school. I am not at all this expense to take crying babes out of the mothers' way, but

to instruct reasonable beings in the road to eternal life ; and it ought to be a rule in all schools not to take the troublesome *young* children, unless the mother will try to spare the *elder* ones, who are capable of learning.'"]

This, after some years' expense and labour, determined us to close the whole, and give the few well-disposed ones leave to go to Shipham. Thus we entirely got rid of a very troublesome, unprofitable school. Yatton is not doing as well as we could wish. The children here are likewise too small, but a tolerable number, and pretty well instructed. At Wedmore we found the thunder rolling at a distance on our first visit, on our second it was a little nearer, and on our third the storm was in perfection. Our master they loaded with every kind of abuse (I believe undeservedly), and they had the assurance to present us at the visitation, as though we had been criminals, and enemies to Church and State. We endeavoured to be present at a parish meeting called for the purpose of jointly signing us out of the parish. Two of the heads came in the evening drunk, and staggering into the room, just before the reading of the sermon, abusing us as a pack of Methodists, and exposing themselves before a most respectable congregation of near two hundred. We endeavoured to soothe and calm them, and persuaded them to stay and witness our proceedings, but could not prevail. It was pleasing to witness an affecting and interesting scene after they were gone. The greater part of the people wept at the prayer and sermon, and seemed truly delighted.

Our clubs this year passed off remarkably well, and continue most flourishing in point of money. It having been a long cold winter, the importance of such an institution to the poor of Shipham had been very great. Forty-six pounds had been drawn out for the relief of the sick and lying-in ; and this, in a parish where there was none to assist, was a prodigious comfort.

Our rewards passed off very successfully also, and our readings continue full, and appear to do much good.

Towards the end of the summer, when everything was going on, as we thought, tranquilly and comfortably, a violent explosion took place at Wedmore. The dean, under whose jurisdiction it is, came to keep the usual residence at Wells. These savage farmers drew up and presented against us a petition which, as we understood, was of a most impudent description. Hannah was obliged to write letters to Dr Moss and other high powers, and use all her influence to enable us to go twenty-eight miles of a Sunday, instruct their poor, and spend seventy pounds a-year upon them. Nothing but the great and important cause this was intended to serve, could have borne us through, amidst the insults we received from these depraved farmers. When their cause became desperate, they had given out a notice in the church that a school would be opened on the following Sunday, where, if the children did not attend, the parish officers should be upon them. When the day arrived, the clergyman met some of the children in the street, and inquired to what school they

were going. They meekly answered they were going to look after the new one, because they were afraid of the parish officers. All these enlightened people live within eight miles of the bishop's palace.

At last they drove us to the sad and expensive necessity of removing our master, or rather dismissing him. He was certainly an active and a truly moral man, but rash and indiscreet; and, receiving great provocations, he might, perhaps, occasionally say strong things. He must have been a surprisingly good man if it were otherwise, for these great men of Wedmore never gave him a permission to appear before them, or to utter in their presence a single sentence in his vindication. An increase of such arbitrary and brutal conduct in our parishes would soon render juries useless. We removed Mrs Carrol to Wedmore, hoping female powers and influence might soften these barbarians; but poor Axbridge was to be the sufferer in consequence. A variety of causes obliged us to suspend the whole scheme at Axbridge for the present. A disagreeable clergyman in sullen opposition, the ordinary heads of the town alike adverse, and keeping back all the children of larger size, the Methodists officious and meddling—all these things combined drove us to the necessity of putting a stop to the schools for the present, but with the full determination of resuming operations when we should see an opening. Mrs Inman carries on the work faithfully and well at Cheddar. She is sound and laborious, and the school prospers in her hands now at the close of the year.

One man and woman, touched by the readings, attend constantly—one comes five, the other six miles. After all, Blagdon is doing so well, and in such a happy state at the end of 1799, that, knowing the uncertainty of all human events, we tremble over its very prosperity. On the whole, I believe I may conscientiously sum up this year much in the same manner as I have done the three last. The Meyricks keep up hitherto a good school at Shipham, and teach tolerably ; but we are not quite easy as to some points about them.

O Lord, do Thou be pleased to bless the work and the instruments of all descriptions—those who find money and those who find labour, that, in consequence of these schemes, many may be brought to the knowledge of a Redeemer ! Amen.

So ends the year of our Lord 1799.

At the opening of the year of our Lord 1800, our letters were all very favourable as to the schools, but very grievous respecting the sufferings of the poor, on account of the dreadful scarcity, particularly those of Shipham and Rowberrow, who had no human aid to look to but ourselves and the club.

We were going on, as we thought, very peaceably and quietly, till the beginning of April, when a violent explosion, long pent up, took place at Blagdon. The curate and justice no longer concealed the cloven foot, but broke out in great fury against poor Younge, our schoolmaster, by getting a loose, silly lad to swear a false oath to the prejudice of his character. H. and I

were both in London when this unpleasant event took place. Bere's letter, accompanying the complaint against Younge, was short and impudent, desiring the dismissal of the master immediately, without allowing him time to plead his own cause, or relate his own tale. We consulted our friends, both Members of Parliament and Bishops, and both were equally disgusted with the haughty proceedings of the Somersetshire justice.

We referred the whole to the mediation and management of Sir A. Elton, a friend whom Providence had provided for us only the year before; but his character was too fair, and his manners too much of a gentleman, for Mr Bere to settle business of conscience with. He would never meet him, but avoided even the monthly intercourse at Langford, when they met as magistrates. At our return into the country, we found he had inflamed the whole neighbourhood against our plans and proceedings, alleging that all was fanaticism and the height of enthusiasm. We went to Blagdon as usual, and carried on our school, which was a very fine one.

For about a month everything seemed getting very quiet, during which time we visited all our other schools, and all were full and flourishing, except poor, dwindling Yatton. Wedmore, indeed, was not so full as we could wish, yet some appearance of improvement; but the parish depraved and shocking as ever. We found this difference, that the people were wishing to shew great personal civility to Mrs Carrol. During the winter we had become acquainted with the new

Dean of Wells, to whom we had been presented as delinquents the year before. He entered warmly into our cause, and gave us all his support, to the dismay and mortification of the great men of Wedmore. The school and reading were both thin ; however, by using the two safest remedies, patience and perseverance, we soon increased both considerably.

The clubs now came forward in due course, and Sir A. Elton preached at Shipham to a very fine audience. It would be difficult to speak in sufficient praise of the sermon. It was a truly admirable discourse in every point of view, and surprised and delighted the congregation. Twelve clergymen were present. He took up our cause, and defended it, in the most able manner, in all its parts. Mr Bere had threatened us with penal statutes ; Sir A. returned the compliment to him, by explaining what provision the law makes against clergymen of the Church of England who openly deny the Trinity, which Bere has repeatedly done. This very able and spirited composition raised quite a clamour in the country, and completely turned the voice of the people against Bere, more from shame than any other cause ; it was Sir A.'s talents and rank in life, I believe, which produced the change, not genuine conviction that their own credulity had been produced by secret enmity to the cause of religion.

We found Nailsea this year most prosperous indeed ; our two young colliers active, obedient, zealous ; the school full, the heads all attention and civility.

Not so at Yatton ; aversion to religion seemed here

materially increased. Before, it was hatred in disguise; now, it was decidedly open. The new minister friendly to us, but detested by his parishioners, on account of an alteration in the tithe.

We therefore determined to make a transfer of the same money and time to another neighbouring village, and on inquiry we found Chew Magna to be populous, ignorant, and wicked—three pretty substantial reasons for fixing there; and, after struggling and toiling at Yatton many years, we reluctantly quitted it for a larger scene of action. And if, during the years we have been at Yatton, some children may hereafter, in the hours of sorrow and distress, recall to mind one useful sentence, or recollect one text of Scripture learned and explained at the school, surely it has not been carried on for nought.

Cheddar club passed well over. Sir A. preached again a sermon of equal eloquence and instruction with the other at Shipham. A very large company; amongst the number the member for Wells and his lady, and thirteen clergymen. Whilst we were settling the annual accounts of the club, an interesting and important event took place. Mrs Stagg, the lady of the manor, was lately dead, and had left a legacy of twenty guineas to the school and five to the club, in public acknowledgment of the good it had done to the parish at large. Her banker appeared, and produced the money before the whole company. This was exceedingly gratifying, and wrought a happy effect, at the very moment Mr Bere was complaining indirectly that we were under-

mining both Church and State by our sly practices, under the specious mask of doing good, and instructing the poor.

[These facts are thus a little more largely related in a hitherto unpublished letter of Hannah More :—

“ I do not know where Mr B.’s machinations will end. Unfortunately, the rector, who lives a great way off, instead of coming to Blagdon, as he had promised me, to investigate the business, has sent for his curate to go down to him : so B. will have all the advantage of making his own statements uncontradicted by the accused party.

“ Sir A. Elton has stood forth in so manly, decided, and Christian a manner, that it has given a new turn to public opinion, which would not have been influenced by the same zeal and abilities in a man of inferior rank and credit. Such is this world ! I prevailed on him to preach again at our second club at Cheddar, a few days ago, in order to follow up the blow, lest the first sermon might be construed into a sudden ebullition of zeal. I believe we had fourteen clergymen. The Tudways (he is member for Wells), all the neighbouring gentry, about fourteen hundred people at church. It is a kind of struggle whether Christian instruction shall be continued or abolished in this county. And these two public days have strengthened our side of the question materially. But I was quite knocked up, though I lay by and did little of the honours. We entertained about seventy of the gentry at dinner—acting like the rest of the world, giving a dinner to those who did not

want it, and only tea to many, many hundreds who had no dinner at home. . . . Some pleasant circumstances occurred. The Dean, before whom we had been presented, for *teaching French principles*, at the visitation, sent a subscription of two guineas, as a public testimony of his support. The lady of the manor had died in the last year. Her representative produced at the club a legacy of five guineas to that institution and twenty guineas to me for the use of the school, as her dying testimony of her approbation to the utility of our labours in the parish. These little things seemed to come providentially in aid of a cause so attacked and maligned."

The *charge* delivered upon this occasion was full, as usual, of sound counsels and exhortations. It was as follows :—

"It is now eleven years since we first came among you ; and I must not drop my annual custom of reminding you of the mercy of our being still spared to renew the meeting. On an anniversary of an institution the object of which is to relieve the sick and afflicted, it is an agreeable consideration, that the day of settling accounts may be made an innocent holiday, when so many kind friends condescend to mix with you, and contribute so greatly to the pleasure of the day. It should likewise impress us with a full determination of making every scheme subservient to religious purposes.

"We should endeavour to make some serious thoughts dwell on our hearts before we enter into company, or

society, or employment. It would be well to put the following question to ourselves :—Am I about to go, or do, or belong to that upon which I dare to beg God's blessing? If it will not stand that test—if I cannot beg of God so to bless it, I may conclude I ought *not* to engage in it, and I ought to fear the consequences if I should be snatched away by death during the act, whatever it be.

“On such an institution as the present, I humbly trust, we may, without presumption, hope for the Divine blessing.

“In our intercourse together for so long a period, you will not expect I should soften the difficulties, for they have been manifold. I will only fulfil my promise of touching upon your former dark and ignorant state, with no other view than to quicken your penitence, and enliven your gratitude to Him who has blessed the means used for your instruction ; and remember that continuance in well-doing will be best secured by sorrowing reflections upon past transgressions.

“With the advantages that now surround you, and with the regular and continued instructions you have had for such a length of time, it will become you diligently to inquire whether the principles of piety and goodness be so really rooted in your hearts that you may live an honour to the Christian profession ; and take care now that you do not rest satisfied with your present low attainments, but endeavour to imitate the great apostle, and in future press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ.

Remember it is very common to *seem* religious, and very rare to be *truly* so. When once the outward show and appearance of piety become either *profitable* or *creditable*, hypocrisy is then likely to prevail ; and the *garb*, and *language*, and *phrases* of Christianity are not seldom assumed by those whose lives and actions too plainly prove that they have in their minds little of the *power* and *spirit* of that godliness of which they make a *parade*. It is more easy to *talk* like a Christian than to *act* like one ; but I would have you bear in mind that they are not *leaves*, but *fruits* that prove the value of a tree.

“ In order to detect the deceitfulness of the heart, I would advise you to attend to the practice of self-examination. As most of you are hard-working people, and have not much leisure, it might be well, perhaps, on a Sunday night, after you have been attending the Word of God both at church and here, to *examine* yourselves by that *Word*, and see whether you have been enabled, in any degree, to live up to it. Examine also your conduct for the past week, and see whether, upon the whole, you have lived a *worse* or *better* life than the week before. For instance ; let every woman present say to herself, Have I watched over my evil tempers ? Have I indulged in any sinful language ? Have I set my child a bad example of pride, passion, or laziness ? Have I prevented their attendance at school, where they are taught the way to heaven, in order to save myself a little trouble ? Have I endangered my own soul and theirs by sending

them to shops on Sundays? Have I neglected secret prayer, or still put off, from day to day, the setting up that most important duty of family prayer? Have I stayed at home from religious instructions upon slight pretences? If you find you have failed in any of these things, then humble yourselves before Almighty God, begging pardon for the past, and grace to do better for the time to come.

“This last trying winter, we flatter ourselves, the club has been particularly acceptable, the scarcity having added much to your trials; and I trust you did not forget that the distress was sent by a merciful Father, who does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men. It has been a season of hardships; but you have been kindly assisted by those who have undertaken to procure you food at a lower price than the markets afforded; and, in suffering by the scarcity, you have but shared in the common lot, with the pleasure of knowing the advantage you have had over many other villages, in your having suffered no *scarcity* of *religious* instruction. You have therefore been taught to know that chastisement is a necessary rod in the hands of Him who is all mercy. The religious husbandman will now be more ready to trace the hand of God in his labours than he probably did before the present visitation. He will recollect that the harvest was ripe for the *reaper*, but before his hand reached it, it was *drowned* in water. Probably it will lead him on to prepare his mind for a more *constant* and *immediate* dependence on the Divine blessing, and to

know that Almighty power can wrest it from him, not only as it passes from his *field* to his *barn*, but from his *hand* to his *mouth*. He will more deeply feel the alternate blessing of shower and sunshine than he did before, and a more immediate sense of the Divine presence will lighten every labour; and it is a vast consolation to know, that every hard-working parent in this parish, when he returns from the fatigues of the day, and partakes, with his family, of his humble meal, can find a child who can bring the additional refreshment of reading to him a few verses of Scripture, and who is also capable (where the parent's education has not enabled him to do it) of reading a family prayer. There is not one mother present but has a child who can do it for her. May none of you trifle with this very great blessing! Pray, take care, now that your children have had their annual rewards, that they are not less punctual than before. Consider, if they are not exact to their time, what a disadvantage it must be to them. As the teachers have so much to do, they must regulate their business with great exactness and care. You know if the children are not here by a certain hour, you rob them of the advantage of *prayer*. Can you reconcile that to yourselves? Your grown-up daughters too, who now partake of the family labours and cares (and very right they *should* do so, and certainly they are out of their duty when they do not), attend some part of the day. It is a good symptom, after eleven years' instruction, to see a love of the cause increase in their young hearts. We trust you will part

with them willingly, when the necessary cares are over, and not detain them on frivolous pretences. They are at a time of life when they require kindness and watchfulness ; and we trust the parents will not be backward in assisting us to guide their *own* children at this critical time of life.

“ I can never omit a short exhortation on the *indispensable* duty of *industry*.

“ Let not the hard-working *worldly man* say he is more diligent and laborious than the *Christian*. No ! The *Christian* will beat the *worldling* at his own weapons, but he will do it on his own *principle*—he will be *industrious*, that he may please *God*. Every common duty acquires a *new character*, and is performed in a *new manner*, when performed on *Christian principles*. ‘ Whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the *Lord Jesus*.’ Children must obey their parents, for this is well pleasing to the *Lord*. Servants must obey in all things, in singleness of heart, fearing *God*. Whatever is done must be done heartily, as to the *Lord*.

“ O gracious God, we presume to ask Thy Divine blessing upon us who are here present, and upon the business of this day. We would thank Thee for the mercies of it, for the religious instruction we have received, and for the seasonable provision made for the afflicted. May the affluent be grateful that they are enabled to give ! May the distressed be thankful for the mercy of receiving ! May those who are in health of body be compassionate to the sick ! May every

heart more and more wish to know the things that belong to their *everlasting* welfare! May there be a growing desire in parents for the good of their children's souls! May those who are not anxious to *promote*, at least not *hinder*, the gospel of Christ! May it be Thy good pleasure to give us a fruitful season; and whilst Thou 'openest Thy hand, and fillest all things living with plenteousness,' do Thou also give us grateful hearts!

"O Lord, save the king; endue his ministers with righteousness. Bless the clergy and magistracy of this land, and may our obedience to them be a sure proof that we fear God and honour the king! And grant that every rebellious motion may be subdued that exalts itself against peace, and patience, and gentleness, and meekness of spirit; and enable us, O Lord, to bear one another's burdens, and to forbear one another in love! We presume not to offer these petitions but through the merits of our blessed Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen."]

The rewards being pretty well disposed of, we devoted our spare time to the necessary inquiries at Chew Magna; but without a house it was impossible to open a school. We tried every means, but could not even procure an old malt-house, which we offered to take at a great price. However, we have partly engaged a young widow in the cause, and sent her three weeks to our university at Cheddar for instruction.

During this time many letters passed on the Blagdon business between Sir A. and Drs Moss and Crossman.

None of the parties much pleased with each other ; but Sir A., with the spirit of a patriot and Christian, determined to support the poor schoolmaster, till he should be found guilty.

At length, with much difficulty, he procured from Dr Moss the thirteen affidavits obtained by Bere from different low people in his parish, in order to criminate poor Younge. These affidavits were as wicked as they were contemptible, as they were from people of the lowest situation and worst character.

In our most pleasing accounts of Cheddar, we had frequently heard of a full church and sacrament ; but we were particularly anxious to know if the congregation was good of a morning, and if they came when the weather was bad. Another anxiety we laboured under was, whether our Sunday evening company attended the communion. An opportunity presented itself for us to judge for ourselves. We went the latter end of September to morning service, and on a sacrament day. It was, luckily, extremely wet—very heavy rain indeed. I thought the church appeared quite full ; but Mrs Gilling assured me the torrents of rain kept away, unavoidably, one hundred of those who came from a great distance, who were very constant, and came almost in all weathers, except in such prodigiously heavy rain. So far report spake truth ; likewise as respected the number of communicants—so many as to prolong the service for nearly two hours. To conclude, we were gratified with seeing the greater part of our evening audience there. In the afternoon we gave rewards of

Bibles, &c., to upwards of three hundred children, and in the evening read a sermon to three hundred more. God be praised, it was a prosperous day !

[Here the journal terminates abruptly, just upon the eve of a most cruel persecution, in which the curate of Blagdon acted his disgraceful part. The particulars* have been already, and sufficiently perhaps, given to the public in my late revered father's "Life of Hannah More." Suffice it to say, that truth, virtue, and religion were not wrecked in the storm, but rode through it triumphantly,* and that the schools which slander hoped to damage were rather forwarded than hindered by its evil tongue. The following is the last specimen I have of this venerable lady's composition. It is her charge to the women of her Shipham club, in the anniversary of 1801.

"MY GOOD WOMEN,—The admirable discourse we have been this day favoured with from the pulpit makes it unnecessary for me to say anything to you in the way of advice or instruction ; but we have now settled the business and adjusted the accounts of the club ; and you know, from the day you and we first met together in this place, I pledged myself, by way of quickening your *attention* to your conduct, to make some *remarks* on it ; and ever since these institutions have been established, we have kept our word—that of

* Mrs H. More gives a pleasing tribute to her sister Martha's bearing and demeanour in the thick of all these trials :—"Patty behaves nobly, and only works the harder for all these attacks. She has been, in all this weather, on a three days' mission to Wedmore, where things look very smiling."

watching over your behaviour during the year, and giving you on this our anniversary meeting either reproof or encouragement, as you might be found to deserve it. We did not then expect that we should have the honour and sanction of so much good company; but were I on that account to discontinue my usual notice of you, you might suspect that we had ceased to watch over you with our usual vigilance.

“You are now at *last* convinced that it is our wish, that both your bodies and minds may receive benefit from these establishments; and it affords us no small satisfaction to believe, that there is scarcely a mother now present who is not at *last* brought to rejoice as much at the *moral* advantages her children derive from the *school* as at the seasonable relief she *herself* receives from the *club*. It is now eleven years since your young people have had the benefit of religious instruction.

“Multitudes who were then *children* are now become *men* and *women*; many of *both* sexes have gone out to service *abroad*; many of our young women have at *home* received our annual wedding gift, on their having entered the married state with a virtuous character (and this, indeed, is the first year when no bride has appeared to claim the favour); many young men bred in the school have been called out to serve their country in the military: and I hope, on examination, that of these various descriptions it will be found that no young person has turned out the worse *servant*, because he has here been taught that he has also a *Master* in *heaven*; that no young woman has proved to be the

worse wife, because she has been led to remember her Creator in the days of her youth ; and that no Shipham or Rowberrow soldier or sailor has served his country the *worse*, because he was here taught to fear God and honour the king.*

"I can scarcely tell whether you or ourselves feel most pleasure at the good accounts we have been receiving during the last winter from the clergyman and the teachers. You well remember how many years it was before we were able to say such encouraging things of your children, and when we were driven to the painful necessity of almost constant complaint.

"You used to keep your children from school, and the young women used to keep themselves away on every *slight* pretence, and often without *any pretence* at all ; but we have the growing satisfaction of finding that even spare diet, and want of clothes, are no longer brought by any as a reason for absenting themselves. Indeed, no conduct *can* be more absurd than to plead the want of *this world's* goods, as a reason why you are

* It is an interesting fact, and may reasonably be considered as a fruit of the instructions given to this village by its two kind patronesses, that during a time of great insubordination and disloyalty, "every single effective male inhabitant of Shipham came forward, begging permission to enrol himself in an association, if it were necessary, or, at any rate, requesting that their little community might send up an address, expressive of their horror of revolutionary principles, and their desire to prove their loyalty on any suitable occasion. The address was prepared, and sent up, with the signature or mark of every individual, to Lord Sidmouth, with an intimation that these were the same patriotic poor fellows who, when the French landed at Fishguard in 1797, were suddenly seen marching in military order to Bristol." The address was acknowledged in handsome terms, it seems, by Lord Sidmouth.

to neglect to secure a *place* in a *better* world ; when the very time people spend in murmuring because they have so poor a portion on *earth*, might be better spent in labouring to obtain a portion in *heaven*.

“There is not now, I trust, a single house in these two parishes in which there is a son or daughter who cannot read and understand the Bible : I wish I was equally sure that there was not one father or mother who has not equal pleasure in *hearing* it *read*. There is not a house on this hill where the children have not been taught to avoid the sin of Sabbath-breaking, and of taking their Maker’s name in vain : I wish I was equally sure that there was not one house where the father never used a profane word—where the mother, who is so diligent in sending her children to *school*, made it equally a point of conscience to go *herself* to *church*. That many of you do so I know ; that you *all may* do so, is *your bounden duty*, and *our earnest desire*.

“It is with real concern I am obliged to touch upon the subject which made part of my address to you last year. You will guess I allude to the continuation of the scarcity. Yet, let me remind you that probably that very scarcity has been permitted by an all-wise and gracious Providence, to *unite* all ranks of people *together*, to shew the *poor* how immediately they are dependent upon the *rich*, and to shew both *rich* and *poor* that they are all dependent on *Himself*. It has also enabled you to see more clearly the advantages you derive from the government and constitution of this

country—to observe the benefits flowing from the distinction of rank and fortune, which has enabled the *high* so liberally to assist the *low*; for I leave you to judge what would have been the state of the poor of this country in this long, distressing scarcity had it not been for your superiors. I wish you to understand also that *you* are not the *only* sufferers. You have, indeed, borne your share, and a very heavy one it has been, in the late difficulties; but it has fallen, in some degree, on all ranks, nor would the gentry have been able to afford such large supplies to the distresses of the poor, had they not denied themselves, for your sakes, many indulgences to which their fortune at other times entitles them. We trust the poor in general, especially those that are well instructed, have received what has been done for them as a matter of *favour*, not of *right*—if so, the same kindness will, I doubt not, always be extended to them, whenever it shall please God so to afflict the land.

“It was a subject of peculiar comfort to us when we considered that the club was a means of procuring comforts to so many of you. We recommend you to receive none of those mercies without most thankfully and solemnly acknowledging from whom they are derived. There is now, through the goodness of Providence, the fairest prospect of plenty—may you receive this happy change with sober gratitude!—but remember, should scarcity again occur, it is your duty to set the example of patience and quiet forbearance to your husbands and your sons. Let it never be said

that the men of Shipham and Rowberrow, who, in a time of supposed invasion, signalised themselves so much by their loyalty, should ever dishonour themselves by turbulence and disorder. Remember that, in the worst of times, industry will lessen the evil, while idleness and depredation endanger your safety in *both worlds*. I hope better things of them, and doubt not, if there should be a fresh call for public exertions, but that they would be among the first to set a good example to their neighbours. Remember that *religion* and *loyalty* are inseparable; that those who honour the king *must* be obedient to the magistrate, and those who profess to love their *country* will best prove it by *obeying* the *laws*. And may that God who never fails to bless and govern those whom He brings up in His steadfast fear and love, keep us under the protection of His good providence, and make us to have a perpetual fear and love of His holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

The following extract from an unpublished letter of Hannah More, addressed to Sir W. W. Pepys, in March 1816, will shew the reader that there was no decline in the prosperity of these female clubs at that advanced stage of the proceedings:—

"My sister Patty, of whom you make kind mention, and myself, having had, for near thirty years, schools in various parishes, appoint the mistresses to assist the distressed and the deserving; and, as they are women of sense and piety, and have served us faithfully very many years, they never abuse the trust. In aid of this we have established Female Friendly Societies in

several parishes, which, by our constant care, have been very successful. In two places only we have 300 members. In the course of twenty years they have received from the fund near £1200 in their sickness, and I have just made over £1200 more to trustees, so that, in the event of my death, things will go on just as they do now. Once a-year we give them a feast at our own expense; so that their box is never impoverished. They are the mothers of our children, of which we have still near 700, though we have been obliged to diminish the number. Many of our teachers have retired from infirmity, and I hope Mr Hume will not hear that a little pension goes with them. Can you forgive all this garrulity? I will only add, that we have one large parish of miners so poor that there is not one creature in it that can give a cup of broth if it would save a life. Of course, they have nothing human to look to but us. The clergyman, a poor saint, told me, when we set up our schools there twenty-five years ago, that eighteen had perished that winter of putrid fever, and he could not raise a sixpence to save a life. I had the happiness of obtaining the living since for this good curate. And now, at seventy-eight, he is indefatigable in his labours, and a great comfort to us in the winter when I cannot go out.”]

It will not, perhaps, be considered an inappropriate termination of this little volume, if I end it with a

short descriptive sketch, drawn by the pen of one who knew her best, of the closing scene of Martha More. It is a portion of a hitherto unpublished letter of her sister, Mrs Hannah, addressed to her friend, Mr Huber :—

“ You have heard of my heartrending bereavement. It has pleased God to take away my chief earthly comfort. My now blessed sister was, I doubt not, removed in mercy to *herself* from a life of suffering to a life of glory. God, no doubt, took her away also in mercy to *me*, that He might draw me nearer to Himself, and that I might cease to lean too much on human supports. As her life was exemplary, so her death was edifying, to all who witnessed it. I praise the Father of mercies that her illness, though exquisitely severe, was short. It was only four days. From a high state of inflammation she was frequently delirious, but all her lucid intervals were spent in prayer and praise. She repeatedly expressed her sole and entire reliance for pardon and acceptance on a crucified Saviour, and exhorted every one individually to look to the cross of Christ. Among the different texts on which she dwelt, the first verse of the 27th Psalm was most frequently on her lips. When some one expressed pity for the agonies of pain she was in, she said—‘ Oh ! I *love* my sufferings ! They come from the Lord, and I love everything that comes from Him.’* A few hours

* Upon this, Mr Simeon remarks, in a letter to Bishop Burgess—“ The words your lordship quotes from Hannah More’s Memoirs, as having been used by her sister Martha in her last illness—‘ I love whatever comes from God ; I love my sufferings ’—struck me also. Is not

before her death she rambled continually; but her ramblings partook of the nature of her sound state. She was continually saying—‘I am afraid that poor man won’t have his shoes. Be sure let that old woman have some stockings.’ This was delirium; but it shewed the habit of her mind. She had been so weak in her chest as not to have been able to read family prayers for some years. On the last Sunday she said—‘I will read the sermon.’ She did so, and Mr Wilberforce admired the spirit and power with which she read it. Her choice of a text was almost prophetic—‘Lord, into Thy hands I commend my spirit; for Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, Thou God of truth.’ I believe few obscure individuals were ever more lamented. Most of our neighbours have put on mourning, and even the poor children in our various schools, and their parents, all contrived to put a scrap of black on their ragged clothes. Several funeral sermons were preached for her. ‘I must finish my journey alone;’ but it is some consolation that the remainder of my pilgrimage must necessarily be short.”

In the Memoir of Hannah More a letter is inserted from an intimate friend of the family, which exhibits an affecting proof of the degree in which the poor of Shiphham felt the loss of their devoted patroness and

this indeed the proper disposition to be exercised in the hour of trial? St Paul (what? was *resigned*? No :) *took pleasure* (εὐδοκῶ) in trials of every description; he had scarcely the word *resignation* in his vocabulary; and we also, according to the grace given unto us, should almost banish that word, except in very grievous trials indeed, and should substitute for it the apostle’s εὐδοκῶ.”—*Simeon’s Life*, p. 751.

benefactor :—"They had long been accustomed to look to the inhabitants of Barley Wood, and one or two other families, as their only resource in the extreme poverty, nearly amounting to famine, to which, by the scantiness of employment, they were frequently reduced; and their applications for relief had consequently become so habitual, that there scarcely passed a day without the arrival of some poor petitioner from the neighbourhood. For several weeks, however, after the departure of Mrs Martha More, this practice was intermitted, to the surprise of the surviving sister. She was told, however, as an explanation of this singular circumstance, in the simple words of one who was the mouthpiece of his neighbours—"Why, madam, they be so cut up, that they have not the heart to come." A singular contrast to the case of a certain king of Judah, of whom it is said, in the significant words of holy writ, 'He departed without being desired.'"

This much-lamented lady died on the 14th September 1819, at the age of sixty-nine, at Barley Wood, a name of greater note than Cowslip Green. She lies buried with her sisters in the churchyard of Wrington, till, at the resurrection of the just, she shall arise with them to glory. If they who are the most useful in their generation have the greatest right to fame, and if they are most worthy of man's honour who are the honoured of the Lord, then there is truth, not flattery, in the epigram of Cowper with which he embellished the memorandum-book of Patty More—

"In vain to live from age to age
We modern bards endeavour ;
In Patty's book I wrote one page,
And gain'd my point for ever."

The following *prose* testimony to her, which occurs in a letter of Cecil to her sister Hannah, may be considered as more valuable, proceeding, as it did, from personal acquaintance :—"I beg to be very respectfully and affectionately remembered to each of your sisters. The conversation I had with the youngest (Mrs Martha) plainly proved to me that, however people may laugh at freemasonry, there certainly is something in it, and that the best account of it is to be found in Jer. xxxii. 39, or in Rev. ii. 17."

The following short character of this valuable lady, written but a few weeks after her death, and inserted in the *Christian Observer* for November 1819, may form no inappropriate conclusion to this little volume :—

"She bore a most distinguished part in those various works of faith and labours of love which were planned by her sister Hannah for the benefit of the poor around her. While Mrs Hannah also was exerting so successful an influence over public morals by her inestimable writings, Martha was accustomed to watch over her with incessant care, and to tend her couch with the most tender assiduity, during the successive inroads made by her mental labours upon a constitution naturally delicate, and a frame peculiarly susceptible.

"In conversation, the energetic powers of Mrs Martha's mind appeared to great advantage. She

always assisted, and often furnished, the topic, without any apparent consciousness, much less any display, of her own powers. It was to another rather than to herself that she ever desired to turn the eyes, the thoughts, the hearts, of all; and, to an attentive observer, she would often seem to be supplying what might be called the rough material of conversation, capable, from its intrinsic worth, of being worked up by her sister into articles of exquisite beauty. Never, perhaps, has there been witnessed an instance of more entire self-devotion to the comfort and happiness of another than Mrs Martha More exhibited towards her sister. She seemed to live but for her, and whatever fame or credit she herself acquired, it was her delight to lay it at her sister's feet.

"The quality most worthy of note, as the basis of Mrs Martha More's character, was her *unfeigned Christian humility*—a humility which was no less active and beneficial to others than it was ornamental to herself. There seemed, to her own mind, to be ever present a sense of her own unworthiness and unprofitableness. This self-renunciation was particularly exemplified by the absence of the slightest tincture of superciliousness or feeling of superiority in her behaviour towards others. On the contrary, she possessed a spirit of the most felicitous and unaffected condescension to those of low estate. All who have witnessed the indefatigable labours of this excellent woman in conducting the institutions for instructing poor children, portioning out and otherwise benefiting poor women

of all ages, must have been struck by the complete insight she seemed to possess into all the affairs of the interesting objects of her care, and the perfectly familiar, yet energetic, manner in which she would address them on every subject connected both with their present and eternal welfare. This familiarity with the cottages and the hearts of her poor neighbours, when acquired by a mind of so energetic and commanding a cast, naturally tended to give her an extraordinary degree of influence among them. Her word was listened to as the decision of a judge. She was remarkably fitted, by her natural talents, and acquired habits of thinking and acting, as well as by the union of overflowing sympathy and resistless energy, to have been the associate of Mrs Fry in arresting the attention and reforming the lives of the lowest and most obdurate of her sex.

“To Mrs Martha More belonged also, as has been already hinted, *a strongly susceptible mind*, which disposed her cordially to sympathise with the varied feelings, the wants and infirmities, the joys and the sorrows, of all around her. She may be truly said to have rejoiced with them that rejoiced, and to have wept with them that wept. Her warm and affectionate soul appeared as if mechanically to vibrate, like a well-strung harp, to every varying note of our common nature: it responded to every touch of benevolence.

“Another prominent characteristic of her mind was *a devoted love and ardent attachment to the king and constitution*. She had more marked excellencies than defects. Her enthusiasm was on the side of the former;

the latter were ever the subject of her unfeigned regret. She had a particular admiration of high talents, when well employed. Hers was an innate and old-fashioned love of greatness in connexion with sterling worth; and those who have witnessed her glowing participation in the triumphs of a Pitt, a Nelson, and a Wellington, would want no better contrast with the colder, but not wiser, speculations of modern theorists, who merge everything heroic in the depths of a vain philosophy.

“Nor was she less remarkable for *a steady attachment to established order in religion* than in politics. Her conscientious feeling and her devotional spirit led her to prefer the worship of the Established Church to every other; and it was with no common warmth that she would pay her tribute of something more than respect to those bishops and pastors who embodied, as it were, its excellent principles in their lives and conversation. But, though she loved the Established Church, she was no bigot. None more respected the pious and peaceable Dissenter; nor did she deem it an inconsistency to hold many of them in high personal regard. No one met with more Christian cordiality every denomination of religionist on neutral ground, and especially in that, to her mind, most congenial institution, the British and Foreign Bible Society. Her testimony on this head, though she is dead, yet speaketh,* and the dying testimony of such a person will not be without its weight to those who value the judgments of the wise and good. Whatever of irregu-

* She left, by will, to this glorious Society the sum of £1000.

larity that institution is said by its enemies to impart to some of its friends, it assuredly imparted none to her. Nor did she deem that the pious and peaceful anniversary of a Wrington Bible Society rendered it inconsistent for her to sorrow when she beheld the peace of the Church disturbed by real fanaticism, or by the mournful errors of a misguided secession.

"In fine, hers was the steady and consistent course of one who pursues, as paramount to every other object, the glory of God, and the grace and salvation of the gospel of Christ. She enjoyed alike a happy exemption from those tumultuous passions which kindle strife among the professors of a religion of peace, and from those violations of the spirit of charity which are produced by a senseless zeal for the mere forms of devotion. She felt deeply and seriously, and, therefore, sympathised with others who did the same. She had no fear, either for them or for herself, of going too far in a right direction; her grand apprehension was that of not going far enough. Hers was a steadfast faith, a joyful hope, a rooted charity. Guided by these, or by that grace which can alone inspire them, we cannot doubt that she so passed the waves of this troublesome world as finally to attain the land of everlasting life, 'there to reign, world without end,' with the Saviour whom she loved and trusted."

THE END.

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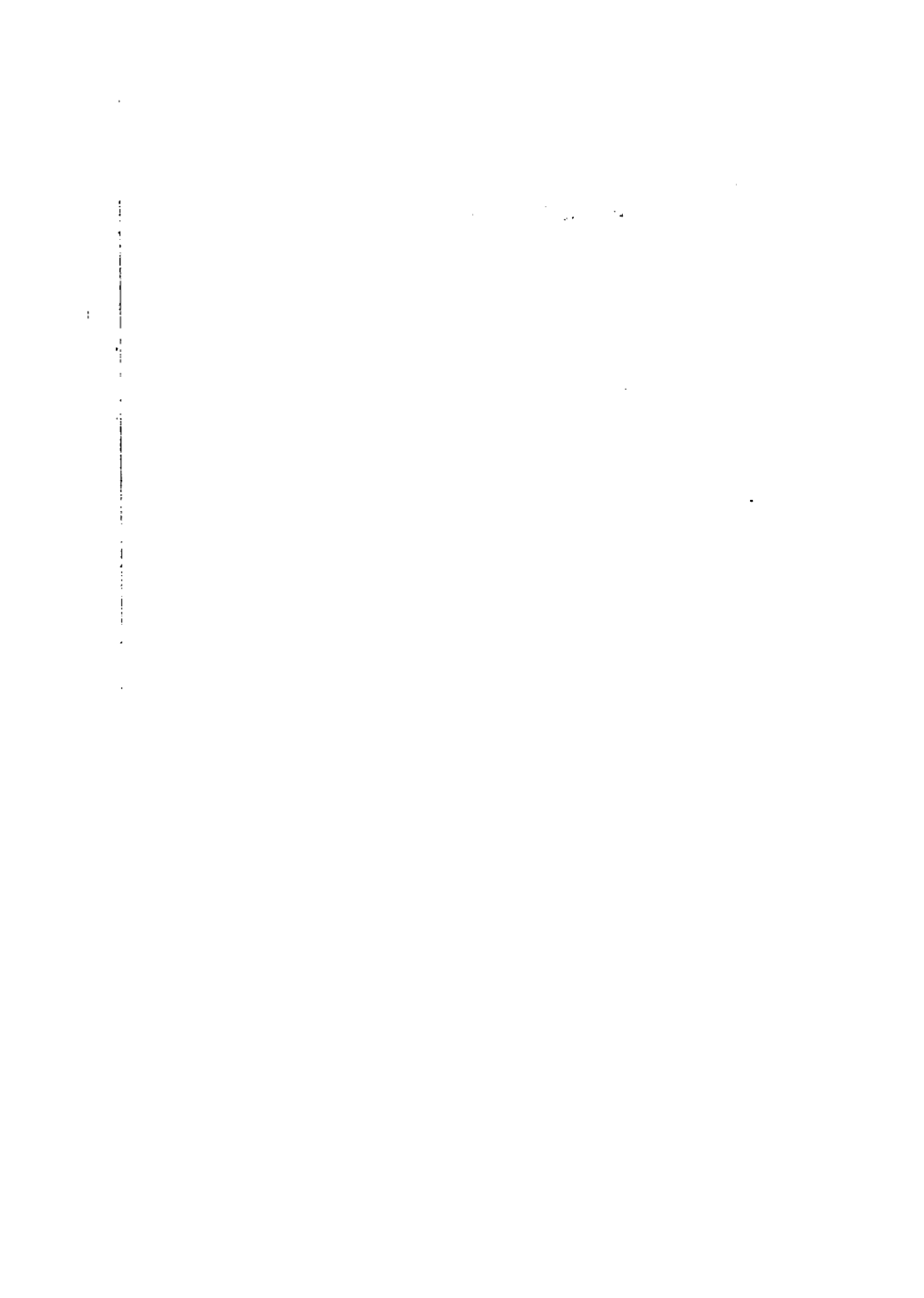
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